BELOW THE JAMES

By

WM. CABELL BRUCE

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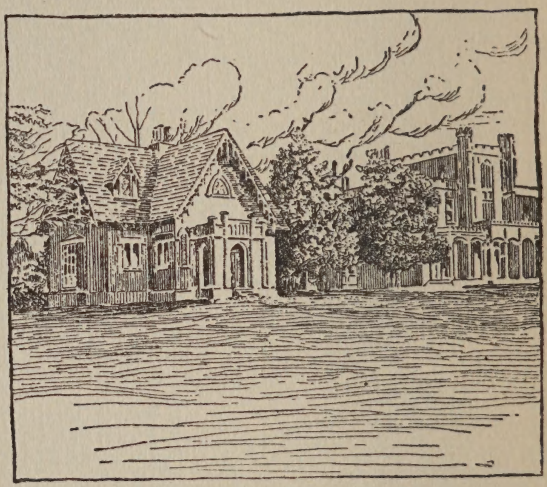

"MOROTOC"

BELOW THE JAMES

A Plantation Sketch

BY

WILLIAM CABELL BRUCE

Author of 'Benjamin Franklin Self-Revealed' and 'John Randolph of Roanoke'

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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TO

THE MEMORY OF MY SON

WILLIAM CABELL BRUCE

AT WHOSE SUGGESTION

THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN

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BELOW THE JAMES

CHAPTER I

FROM RANDOLPH TO MOROTOC

I AM a native of Massachusetts, and my name is John Endicott.

Among my classmates at Harvard, on the eve of the Civil War, was Charles Cabell, whose home was in the southern part of Virginia. While at college together, we were close friends; notwithstanding the many serious incompatibilities of training and opinion — born of discordant sectional conditions — which marked our respective characteristics and views.

Few of my classmates were more generally admired or better liked than was Charles Cabell. In figure, he was tall and slender, and, though courteous and unselfish in manner and

disposition, he was distinguished by a certain dignity and reserve of bearing, which, readily as they yielded to generous, cordial impulses and to a delightful vivacity of spirits, pointed him out clearly as the product of influences and circumstances based upon radical social contrasts. His physiognomy was of the type that we call 'interesting' in a youth, and 'noble' in an old man. His high, shapely brow was set off by a thick-set crown of dark hair, and, together with his prominent cheek bones and aquiline nose, betokened a significant family history.

Charles and I parted at Harvard with many sincere assurances of mutual good-will and regret — I to study and practice law in Boston, and to become an officer in the Union Army during the Civil War; he to become the master of a large plantation in Southern Virginia, and an officer in the Confederate Army.

Not until the fratricidal conflict was at an end, and some ten years of peace had deprived

it of much of its bitterness, was the silence between us broken — and then by an affectionate letter, in which he recalled the tie that had formerly existed between us, and invited me to pay him a visit.

The invitation I gladly accepted; for it not only meant to my friendship the renewal of personal relations that my memory had cordially cherished even during the animosities of the Civil War, but was to my patriotism a sign that the restoration of the Union was to be something more than a mere legal fiction; and, a few days later, I was on a south-bound train on the Richmond and Danville Railroad, in the State of Virginia, and approaching Randolph, the station on that road at which I was to be met by the carriage of my friend.

As we were slowing up for the stop at Randolph, my attention was arrested by an apparently angry altercation between our conductor and a stalwart, lynx-eyed fellow-pas-

senger of mine, which waxed more and more animated until the former invoked in a loud voice the aid of a fellow-employee, and, with his assistance, ejected this passenger from the car just as our train was coming to a standstill at the station platform. The fellow was a powerful man, with lines of inflexible resolution channeled upon his face, and it seemed to me at the time that he was not quite putting forth the full measure of his physical strength when he was pushed off.

There was a small group of negroes standing on the station platform, and, as our train moved away, leaving me behind at Randolph, he strode towards them in a towering state of wrath, as it seemed, and vehemently denounced, as he strode, the rough treatment to which he had been subjected.

'I was a Yankee soldier, and fought for four years to make you free,' I heard him say, among other things, 'and I have been kicked off that car as if I were a dog, simply because

Below The James

Bruce, Wm. Cabell

these damned rebels choose to call me a carpetbagger and a white nigger.'

Everything became clearer to me shortly afterwards, when I learned that this man was a clever Richmond detective; that his ejection from the train was the result of deliberate collusion between the conductor and himself; that, on the strength of his representations to the negroes, into whose arms he had thrown himself, he had been received under the roof of one of them, and that, in a few days, he had so completely wormed himself into the unsuspecting confidence of the negro population about Randolph as to secure all the evidence needed for the conviction and confinement in the Virginia State Penitentiary of the negro incendiaries who had kindled the mysterious fires by which three barns of old Captain Tom Watkins, near Randolph, had, one after the other, been consumed.

Such was my first introduction in person to *post-bellum* Southern conditions.

The carriage was awaiting me, and, before the tumult occasioned by the expulsion of the pretended carpetbagger had ceased to engage my attention, I found myself accosted by the negro servant, Henry Lewis, who was in charge of it. He was a short and rather stout, but, at the same time, a very alert and nimble-footed, mulatto, with a certain suggestion of tricky insincerity about his manner; despite the assiduous, almost frisky, alacrity with which he carried into execution any request made of him.

'We'se bin 'specting you,' he said. 'Marster gin out a noration dat you was comin', and I'se ready to take you right home wid dis par of horses and dat cayage.'

As Henry made the announcement, he pointed with pride to a pair of spanking roans near by — whose hoofs and limbs showed that there was no lack of red clay in the soil of that part of the world — and to the light carriage to which they were attached, which exhibited

still more convincing proofs of the same thing.

From Randolph, in Charlotte County, to the house of my friend, in the same county, was about fifteen miles. Twice, on the road, we were poled across the Staunton River — one of the prongs of the bifurcate Roanoke River — in flat-bottomed ferryboats, to which our horses reconciled themselves with surprising *sang froid*.

On the hills to our right, a short distance out from Randolph, was the spot where John Randolph of Roanoke had spent the greater part of his eccentric and unhappy existence. It would be hard to imagine contradictions more glaring than those that lurked in his environment. His home consisted of two rude structures, erected in the bosom of the primeval forest: one his summer residence; the other, a mere log cabin, his winter residence. Yet the lonely occupant of these two dwellings was as haughty an aristocrat, in his way, as any who ever wore a coronet. His home was

the center of a great plantation, rich in timber, and annually productive of much corn and tobacco. Among his most cherished possessions was a fine stud of thoroughbred horses; for he loved the race-track and all the excitements that cluster about it. In his youth, as his portrait by Gilbert Stuart shows, he had a face of almost seraphic softness and beauty. When that portrait was painted, disease and gnawing passions had not yet worked the miserable shipwreck of his physical constitution, which afterwards arrested the public gaze almost as much as his reputation for brilliant talents. In his veins flowed the blood of the Indian Princess Pocahontas — one of the most romantic figures in history — and of the conspicuous Randolphs of the Colonial Era. He was under the spell of the Old-World culture; he knew his English classics as an aged pietist knows her Bible; his diction was as pure and nervous as that of the best of them; and his sensitiveness to the proper use of words

was such that, when he was asked on his death-bed whether he 'lay' easily, he replied quickly, with a slight inflection of impatience, 'I *lie* as easily as a dying man can.' Primitive as his summer and winter homes were, they were not lacking in literary masterpieces and fine portraits and furniture; and, when he drove abroad, his blooded horses and slave escort gave a touch of lordly ostentation to his progress. A New-Englander, I could not forget that he had been a kind master, who, notwithstanding his inflexible fidelity to the political interests of his order, closed his life by providing for the liberation of his numerous bondsmen — an act that drew from John Greenleaf Whittier these striking lines:

> Bard, Sage, and Tribune! in himself
> All moods of mind contrasting —
> The tenderest wail of human woe,
> The scorn like lightning blasting;
> The pathos which from rival eyes
> Unwilling tears could summon,
> The stinging taunt, the fiery burst
> Of hatred scarcely human.

Mirth, sparkling like a diamond shower,
From lips of life-long sadness;
Clear picturings of majestic thought
Upon a ground of madness;
And over all Romance and Song
A classic beauty throwing,
And laurelled Clio at his side
Her storied pages showing.

When, a few days later, I declaimed these lines in Charles Cabell's ear — remarking the heightened color that came into his cheek and the increased luster that lit up his eye as I uttered them — he quietly observed that it was certainly very much to the credit of a remote and thinly settled Virginia county, such as Charlotte County was, that it should have been the home, not only of one public man, capable of eliciting such a glowing poetic tribute as this, but of another, Partick Henry, who had been panegyrized by Bryon as

The forest-born Demosthenes,
Whose thunder shook the Philip of the Seas.

As we journeyed from Randolph to our destination, there were other things besides Roa-

noke and the ferries to solicit my attention. It was in the month of November, and our road for the greater part of the way was still hard and smooth; but the knowledge that I had acquired, during the Civil War, of the red-clay highways of Virginia left me at no loss to understand how amphibious would be the task of getting over it in midwinter when reduced to the state of deep, liquid viscidity, with which I was so familiar. A Virginian, speaking of the extent to which the dirt roads of Southside Virginia were washed to pieces by every thunder-shower, once said to me that, after trying in vain to keep those on his farm in a permanently good condition, he had concluded that the best plan was to make a road for himself as often as he required one. The point of this statement became entirely manifest to me when I noted how ineffectual even the most careful management in limeless Southside Virginia was to prevent the erosion which sometimes converts a road in a single

night into a series of small abysses and precipices, and opens up on almost every hillside the unsightly gullies with which Henry A. Wise, in his extravagant State pride, said he would no more quarrel than he would with the wrinkles on his old mother's brow.

The country disclosed by our journey compared but poorly with the beautiful Valley of Virginia, with which I had become acquainted as a soldier, or even with the Piedmont territory in Northern Virginia over which also I had been borne on one of the waves of Federal invasion. Not that it lacked natural beauty. Far from it. Its surface was broken up into bold hills and deep valleys, and, along every inviting level that it afforded, some pure, meandering brook found its way into the Staunton River. It was densely canopied, too, by vast forests in which 'the ash far-stretching his umbrageous arm,' 'the poplar, that with silver lines his leaf,' and 'the lord of the woods, the long-surviving oak,' of poor Cow-

per, and some species of trees, unknown to him, abounded.

While in Southside Virginia, I frequently heard slurs cast upon the broom-sedge and old field pine, which are such constant features of its flora, but I could not share the feelings, born doubtless of agricultural prejudices, in which this contumely was rooted. If the rapidity with which a neglected field becomes invested with broom-sedge or sprinkled with young pines, adds to the labor of tillage, these products of the soil — the one because of its tawny tint, the other by reason of its vivid, glossy green — present in the winter aspects by no means displeasing to the eye of an outsider, who regards them without reference to anything but their primary claims as members of the vegetable kingdom. Nor even from a purely agricultural point of view should it be forgotten that the roots of a luxuriant mass of broom-sedge hold many a slope fast that would otherwise be hopelessly galled and fis-

sured by the elements, and that the old field pine, besides casting a verdant mantle of charity over an exhausted and scarred tobacco-lot, brings it back in time to renovated life with its shade and yearly *exuviæ* of twigs and tags.

The upland soil of Southside Virginia is not favorable to the standard grasses. Under the hot sun of that latitude, it is occasionally too arid for them, and consequently not seldom, especially when it is a little thin, wears a bare, parched look even after recent rains. So far as forage crops are concerned, it is best adapted to more or less sub-tropical plants like the cowpea, which, in its desire for warmth, is not unlike the Virginian himself, who is notoriously inclined, even upon a day that a New-Englander would regard as little less than genial, to back up the most restful part of his physical structure as closely as possible to the cheerful blaze of an open fire. But, given a useful plant, or a tree, or a weed, for which South-

side Virginia is a suitable habitat, and, if the soil in which it stands is at all fertile, it is amazing to see with what rankness it prospers and grows. The combination of an intense sun with an abundant rainfall takes care of that. There is a long spell of torrid heat, and the earth is shot through and through with the fierce solar rays. Then follows a torrential downpour, and, presto! the whole country is a great forcing-house. Particularly noticeable are the results in the rich alluvial stretches along the Staunton River — always more or less moist anyhow — where crab grass and buffalo weeds flourish almost like canes or vines in an East Indian or Cuban jungle.

But I am anticipating. When I spoke of the impression of inferiority left upon my mind by my first glimpse of Southside Virginia, as compared with my observation of some other parts of Virginia, I was referring to industrial, rather than to natural, shortcomings. To one accustomed to the populous communities of

Massachusetts, its thrifty farms and the hum of its factories, the country-side along which Henry Lewis drove me — after we left behind us the fertile meadows of the Staunton River — was a singularly backward one; so backward, indeed, that, when the superior character of the English and Scotch-Irish stock, by which that part of Virginia had been settled, was duly taken into account, it was impossible (even after all allowances had been duly made for the calamitous effects of the Civil War) to avoid the conclusion that its economic development had been stunted by the influence upon human energy and enterprise of a great mass of squalid, servile negroes, now happily free.

But for a small, portable sawmill, I should not have seen an industrial plant of any description. All the activities of that region were wholly agricultural, and its agricultural methods, back from the Staunton River, where the wealthier land-owners were seated, were

hardly more advanced than those of the early colonists around Jamestown. For the most part, after we first crossed the river, and before we returned to it, our road conducted us through dense woods, with an occasional clearing that revealed either a haggard field (abandoned, or all but abandoned, to its fate, after ruthless impoverishment, like a despoiled and lifeless victim of lawless violence) or new grounds studded with charred stumps, and overhung in places by the gaunt, decaying branches of belted trees. Here and there, my attention was called to some unpainted farmhouse, with its run-down outbuildings, shut off from its surroundings by a rickety paling fence, or to some one-room log cabin, with enough young idling negroes about its door to make the entire vicinage blossom like the rose, had it only been possible to get them down to steady and continuous work under intelligent direction. At times a musical cow-bell, set in motion by the movements of a cow, munching

the scant herbage in some old tobacco-plant patch in the woods, showed that live stock was still pastured in very much the same way as in the age of Captain John Smith.

It was only at long intervals that we met any white man on our way, but when we did, no matter how shabbily he was dressed, I could not help asking myself, I confess, whether he was a member of that body of incomparable infantry which for four years carried, with such dauntless valor, the fortunes of the Southern Confederacy upon the points of its bright bayonets.

Between Randolph and the end of our journey, we did not pass through even a single hamlet except one little congeries of buildings, made up of a country store, a blacksmith and wheelwright shop and a few other frame structures, called Providence. Perhaps this place was given its name, Charles afterwards laughingly suggested, on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle; and had been dubbed Providence

because Providence had conferred upon it so few of the visible proofs of its favor. The usual number of loungers, it is needless to say, were assembled about the door-sill of its 'store,' ready to direct upon me, as we passed by, that fixed, unblinking, petrifying gaze with which such a gathering invariably turns away from the deadly monotony of their ordinary lives, in a simple and thinly populated community, to drink in the face of a stranger on his way to some conspicuous rooftree. Henry knew from long experience that they would certainly be there; so, just before we came within the range of their vision, he sounded a slight crack of his whip in the ears of his spirited roans, and, without even casting a single look at the group — except out of the corner of his eye to note the impression he was making — dashed by at a pace which nearly caused the death of a panic-stricken rooster, and upset even the stolid gravity of a little, undernourished, dwarfish bull which had been

hitched, with the cart to which he was harnessed, to a tree near a corner of the store.

A few miles more brought us to a plateau, which rose above the valley of the Staunton, and commanded a distant prospect across it (to which Henry was quick to call my attention) of the turrets of Charles' home, 'bosom'd high in tufted trees' on the summit of a lofty hill. As we ascended the face of this plateau, I observed quite a large and neat farmhouse on my left, encircled by fields which told their own story of careful tilth and judicious management.

'What house is that?' I asked Henry.

'Dat is de house,' he replied, 'whar old Gin'ral Washington slep one night arter de Maxican War, and whar Mr. Bob Smith, one of de bes farmers in dese parts, holds hissef out now.'

Having traveled over most of the original thirteen States of the Union, I have been

shown so many houses that were said to have had the honor of sheltering Washington that I have sometimes marveled at the close association which exists between his fame and Mount Vernon. He was not unlike a dear relation of Charles' wife, who had a home in Virginia called 'Rest-a-while,' but who was so social and beloved that she spent most of her time in the houses of her kinsfolk and friends.

'She seems to go everywhere,' said Charles on one occasion. 'Indeed,' he added, 'I should not be surprised to hear that she had even visited "Rest-a-while."'

To my right, as our horses trotted along, after we lost sight of Mr. Bob Smith's house, was 'Mildendo,' the home of the Carringtons, aristocrats as true to type as the Randolphs. The name of this house, of course, was borrowed from Mildendo, the metropolis of Lilliput, in 'Gulliver's Travels.' Virginia *is* the Ancient Dominion, we should remember. I was later to be told by Charles that the Carring-

tons of Mildendo were given by the negroes on both sides of the Staunton River a very high rating as 'quality.' Referring to one of the ladies of the family, who was never seen moving about except in a carriage — a fact due far more, it is only fair to say, to redundancy of flesh than to patrician arrogance — one of these negroes was heard to whisper in terms full of mingled admiration and awe:

'Her foot never teches de groun'.'

On the plateau mentioned by me, in the immediate vicinity of the river, we came to what appeared to me to be the most abjectly sterile piece of land that I had ever seen in a state of abortive cultivation. Its soil was what is known in Southside Virginia as a 'hominy soil,' that is to say, a soil made up of small granulated conglomerations of stony particles in which a corn or tobacco plant scarcely finds enough moisture and *humus* to color itself green, much less attain its normal size. The only oak on this land, I observed, was the

black-jack which has the New England faculty for thriving on the leavings of Nature.

'What place is this?' I inquired of Henry.

'Dis,' he answered sententiously, 'is de place whar no man kin make a livin', no matter how much he sweat, cuss, or int'russ hissef. Fust, old Dr. Simmons tried, an' he got busted. Den dat man from Pennsylvania, Mr. Zane, he try and 'rupt hissef to pieces. An' now dis here Western man, Mr. Jones, he done take hold, an' is headed straight for smash, for sartain. His case so desp'rate, he do'an even keer whedder he is or not. Las' summer, Marster, when his 'tention happened to be p'inted to de grass in dat terbacker lot over dar, axed Mr. Jones what for he 'low dat. Now what do you s'pose dat man say arter looking over dat lot jes ez cool-like ez if he had mo'an two shirts to his back? "Waal, dat lot ain't likely to either make or break me!" Marster 'scuse him dat time, but he didn't 'scuse him de nex'. A day or so arter dat, I was drivin' Marster

from de cote-house, an' jes befo' we got to de fork beyant de Coles Ferry sto' we came up behind Mr. Jones, walkin' as if he moughty tired. Dat man allus tired, I b'lieve, dough dey do say he is from Ohio. Well, Marster passed him de time o' day, an' offered to give him a lif' ez fur ez de Coles Ferry sto', whar his road an' ours didn't jine no mo'. When we got dar, I stopped de cayage, an' he step down, an', jes ez sho ez dere's a God in hebben, dat Norffern man run his han' down his empty pocket an' say to Marster, "What de damage?" My! if de blood didn't rush into Marster's face at de owdacious notion dat he would sell a lif' in his cayage to a neighbor same ez if it was corn or terbacker. "Damage!" sez he in a voice dat must have gone through dat man like de bref from an ice-cream freezer, "none, sir, 'cep' what I has suffered by sitting beside a feller like you."'

In a few moments more, we were ferried across the Staunton River, which is about

seventy-five yards wide at this point, and I found myself on Charles Cabell's plantation, which consisted of some five thousand and fifty-two acres of land, largely river bottoms, hardly less fertile than the slime of the Nile. It has been known to produce in a single season as many as five thousand barrels of corn and a million tobacco plants; not to mention large crops of oats and hay. It was then about four o'clock in the afternoon, and, though it was November, the air in that benignant clime was deliciously bland and soft, and all the more enchanting because the hills, which skirted the Staunton River low-grounds, were swimming in the faint, smoky haze of the Indian Summer — thus termed, I suppose, because so suggestive of the atmosphere produced by tranquil puffs from the Indian pipe of peace.

As we made our way up the valley of the river towards the mansion, we were in full sight of a great part of the wide, alluvial mea-

dows, formed by the junction, nearly at right angles, of the river and one of its tributaries, which constituted the most striking feature of the property; and it seemed to me that I had never before seen such an overflowing granary of corn as those meadows were. If every individual stalk in that vast host of withered corn-stalks were an armed man, I thought, they might almost presage another Gettysburg or Chancellorsville!

After hugging for a considerable distance the north bank of the river, we veered away from it, and kept for a short distance along the eastern bank of the tributary, of which I have just spoken. It is known as Turnip Creek. And, in mentioning its name, I might add that the national inclination for rechristening well-known streams with classical names, which Thomas Moore noted when in America, does not prevail in Charlotte County. 'And what was Goose Creek once is Tiber now,' is one of the churlish lines, it will be remembered, that

the little man scribbled when he so far forgot himself as to use the generous table of American hospitality as a writing-desk on which to indite spiteful gibes against the American people. The planters of Charlotte County seem to have made a point of retaining the names given to the streams of the county by its first rude inhabitants. Among these names are Horsepen Creek, Cub Creek, Wolf Trap Branch, and Buck Branch, and also, I regret to say, Little Louse Creek and Big Louse Creek.

We continued along the east side of Turnip Creek until we came to a broad road, which led through the plantation low-grounds to a point just opposite a pair of handsome iron gates that barred access to a private road which wound its way, by a series of carefully planned gradations, through a grove of oaks, known as 'The Grove,' up a steep slope that ascended to a circular grass-plat immediately in front of the mansion. Turning into the low-

ground road, we made our way along it, after passing over Turnip Creek, to the point opposite the gates, and thence, by a short offshoot, to the iron gates themselves. A few minutes later, I was standing on the front porch of the mansion, and receiving the cordial greetings of its inmates, who had for some time, Charles told me, been listening for the crunching sound of our wheels on the bed of the stony stairway by which we had climbed to the end of our journey. Of course, Charles looked older than he did when he and I were classmates at Harvard, but, when I shook hands with him and closely scanned his kind, impressive face, bronzed by incessant exposure to all the vicissitudes of the seasons, it seemed to me that time had done him little wrong. By his side, as he clasped my hand, stood his wife, Sally.

> O, two such silver currents, when they join,
> Do glorify the banks that bound them in,

I found myself more than once saying, in the

words of the First Citizen in 'King John,' when I came to know her as well as I did him. At the moment of our first meeting, however, I cannot deny that, though her salutation was that of a true hostess, there was a touch of austere constraint in her dignified demeanor that somehow set up a train of mental association between my situation at the time and my old Federal uniform hanging in my wardrobe in Boston. She afterwards came to like me; but I soon found that it was not good form for me to make any reference to the Civil War in her presence. Indeed, down to the present time, if a conversation about the Civil War springs up in her presence, even when there is no one to engage in it except the members of her own family, she at once sinks into absolute silence, grows restless, and avails herself of the first opportunity to steal away unobserved to the privacy of her chamber, where, it may be added, for many years she kept the only copy of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' in the house locked up

in her wardrobe; so that its contents might not poison the minds of her children.

Grouped with Charles and his wife, as they welcomed me, were his two youthful sons, and Ellen, a young, unmarried sister of Charles', whose fair face and graceful figure were not lost upon me when I was introduced to her. Just behind these figures stood Lazarus, a stout, black negro, with a grave, honest face, who took my bag in hand, and showed me to the room reserved for me; and afterwards assisted in transporting my trunk, which had been strapped to the trunk-rack behind the carriage, to this room. It was known as the 'Blue Room,' and was never used except when the sacred rites of hospitality called for the most generous measure of deferential consideration that could be paid to a guest.

The evening passed very agreeably. After supper, we repaired to the library, and gathered about an anthracite fire there, which had been kindled in a small grate with the aid

of an old-fashioned blower; for, with the advent of night, in the month of November, the heat of such a fire was not unseasonable even in the mild climate of Southern Virginia. Here we sat until quite a late hour, Charles and I chatting about my journey from Randolph and the old ambrosial Harvard days; and only ceasing now and then to reply to some more or less formal question or observation of the Mistress, or to some arch, sprightly interruption by Ellen.

Finally the Mistress suggested in terms of stately politeness that Captain Endicott probably felt fatigued after his lengthy journey over such rough roads and through such a primitive country, and would not be averse to a good night's sleep; whereupon Charles accompanied me to my room, but not until I had snatched an opportunity, at the foot of the winding staircase that led up to it, to tell Ellen how charmed I was with what I had seen of Charles' home and its

household, and to say that it must be a very rare garden that could grow such a flower as the pure-white Microphylla rose which she wore in her hair. In parting with me for the night, Charles, after wishing me a profound rest, was careful to impress upon me the fact that the 'breakfast bell' would be preceded by a 'rising bell' which would afford me ample time for completing my toilet.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST DAY AT MOROTOC

I DID rest profoundly; but the next morning when, with the workings of reviving consciousness, I was beginning to dream of a garden in which there was a Microphylla rose on every vine and stalk, I was awakened by the resonant tintinnabulations of a bell downstairs, and, entirely forgetting that there was to be a rising as well as a breakfast bell, I leaped hastily out of bed just as Lazarus, with a can of hot water in his hand, opened the door, and inserted into my room a countenance full of vigilant solicitude.

'Is that the breakfast bell, Lazarus?' I asked in a voice that plainly enough indicated my flurry of excitement. In an instant, the fixed countenance underwent a complete transfiguration.

'Sho'ly, Cappen Lindicut,' said Lazarus in

accents in which profound respect struggled with reproach, 'you do'an think dat we would treat our guests *dat* way. Dat am de rising bell.'

Every morning after that, while I was one of these favored guests, I took good care not to leave my bed until this faithful soul and courteous, old-school gentleman had entered my chamber, and announced, in one form of incorrect syntax or another, that the rising bell had sounded. Sometimes, the formula was: 'Cappen Lindicut, de rising bell have rung'; sometimes, 'Cappen Lindicut, de rising bell has ring,' but never, so far as I recollect, did Lazarus, in his wrestlings with past participles, entirely succeed in reducing the melody of that bell to harmony with the laws of grammar. The more I saw of him, however, the more impressed I was with his sterling worth as a man and his natural dignity of character. Apparently, there is no prestige to a Virginian, white or colored, like that of be-

ing descended from an Indian, and Lazarus' weakness was the belief, probably an amiable delusion, that the caste to which his personal standing was condemned had at one time been slightly mitigated by intermarriage between one of his forbears and a redskin.

When I descended to the dining-room, I found that the Mistress was indisposed, and had delegated her function (that of the presiding spirit of the breakfast table) to Ellen, who exercised it with an ease and animation that made me feel more at home than ever. She warned me that, if I were not careful, I would come back, after an all-day ride with Charles, whom she pictured as a kind of centaur, as overtaxed as a tired hound. She inquired earnestly whether my coffee was sweet enough, and reminded me, with a merry laugh, that I was in a land of reckless profusion, where I could almost have loaf-bread, biscuit, rolls, buttermilk bread, Sally Lunn, batter-bread, flannel-cakes, or waffles, any or

all of them, at breakfast, as I pleased — and afterwards be regaled with buckwheat cakes and syrup, or honey besides. Virginians, she said, scarcely realized, she was sure, what a monstrously unreasonable petition they sent up when they prayed for their daily bread. Altogether, between Ellen's attentions and lively sallies and the responsive spark that the latter kindled in her brother, my first breakfast at Charles' home proved a pleasant one; so much so that I almost forgot that as yet I had obtained but a limited insight into my general physical environment.

Morotoc, for that was the name of Charles' home, was built in the early half of the Nineteenth Century. Its architecture was, in the main, Gothic, and its walls, which were very solid and thick, were made of brick, overlaid with stucco. With its projections, it covered an extensive area of ground, and its turrets and battlements were so high uplifted above the crest of the hill, on which it stood, as to

make it a conspicuous object at a great distance. A really beautiful marble porch, slightly elevated above a pair of low, long granite steps, floored with marble blocks and overarched by a smaller battlemented roof of its own, supported by fluted pillars of soft gray marble, extended across the entire front of the edifice, which faced southwards. Another porch at the back of the mansion, supported by large, high, iron pillars, painted white, led in one direction to a conservatory on its west side, and in another to a lengthy colonnade which ran off at right angles from its rear, and was broken up, as it receded, into a bathroom, a kitchen, a washroom, a laundry, and two other rooms used for different domestic purposes. These rooms looked out upon a wide footway of nicely jointed flagstones, covered by the same roof as themselves, and flanked, as it gradually ascended from the rear of the mansion to its highest elevation above the earth, by a row of small, iron pillars

painted white. From the end of the colonnade projected eastwardly a wood-house for the storage of firewood, of the same general design and materials as the main building.

A few paces to the right of the front porch of the mansion stood a two-story, five-room building, known as 'The Office.' This secondary building was intended primarily as a place for the transaction of plantation business and the preservation of vouchers and other papers pertaining to the plantation operations, but it was put to additional uses. Three of its rooms were on the first floor. One, the plantation office proper, contained a billiard table, which beguiled the tedium of weather too forbidding for outdoor pastimes; another was chiefly given over to the occasional accommodation of skilled mechanics from Richmond, or of strangers not entitled, for one reason or another, to the fullest measure of hospitable consideration. Behind this last room was the gun-room, in which guns, ammunition and

other shooting accessories were kept; for Charles was an eager and accomplished sportsman, as were most of the larger landholders about him. A boy in Southside Virginia begins to ride and shoot so early in life that he usually cannot tell you when he first bestrode a saddle, or brought down a bird on the wing. The two rooms upstairs were maintained as reserve bedrooms for the rare emergencies to which the principal mansion was inadequate.

Such a castellated building as the latter was would hardly harmonize with the democratic conditions now universally prevalent throughout the United States, but it was entirely in accord with the baronial, half-feudal position which Charles had occupied as the owner of a tract of some five thousand acres and some five hundred slaves. In the rear of the colonnade, and separated from it by a broad roadway that led off to the back entrance to the mansion grounds, was the smoke-

house, in which the bacon furnished each month to Charles' servants and laborers, and the hams, consumed by the family itself, were cured. The latter were believed to be quite as good as the famous hams cured at Smithfield, Virginia, which found their way even to the table of Queen Victoria. If I were writing a cook-book, I should gladly describe in detail the laborious treatment to which they were subjected before they were fully matured, but, as my readers will never have an opportunity to eat any of them, I shall not linger upon the several offices that hickory ashes, molasses, pepper, and cloves were made to perform in bringing these hams to the proper pitch of perfection. Of rights, this smoke-house should have been of brick, and should have had a touch of Gothic about its exterior, to reduce it to some sort of conformity with the mansion and its appurtenances; but unfortunately it was in point of material and form little more than a wooden barn, safe from demolition only

because of the expense that would have attended the effort to retrieve the blunder of its original erection by replacing it with a less incongruous structure. As it was, it was allowed to stand intact in all its shabby unsightliness, and unceasingly to swear to its heart's content (in an architectural sense) at its more imposing neighbor.

At the distance of a hundred-or-so feet back of the smoke-house, on the edge of a deep ravine, carpeted with periwinkle, and shaded by tall oaks, was an ice-house, which, notwithstanding the genial climate of Southside Virginia, was almost invariably filled with ice each winter from two ponds about a quarter of a mile away. These ponds were completely shut off from the south by a steep, wooded bluff, and fed, in part, by a branch which issued from the spring, known as 'The House Spring,' that furnished the mansion with drinking-water. There were other springs from which water was forced to the

mansion through a lead pipe for laundry and kindred purposes by a hydraulic ram; but all the drinking-water used there was conveyed to the house in vessels borne in the human hand, or on the human head, as in the age of Leah and Rebecca. Charles told me that, when he first installed his hydraulic ram, he advised his brother, who resided in an adjoining county, to install one, too, but he replied that he did not care for any better ram than a little negro's head. This was the brother, by the way, who, when asked by the Mistress whether she could help him to pigs' feet, a dish he abhorred, replied dryly: 'No, I thank you, I am not yet reduced to extremities.' In that remote region, a well-filled ice-house was a matter of capital importance; for only with its aid could the fresh meat of the animals butchered upon a plantation be preserved, or the watermelons and cantaloupes grown on its soil be reduced to the proper temperature.

While at Morotoc, my attention was called to a structure in front of the ice-house, which, consisting as it did of two great upright stones, firmly planted in the earth, with a similar stone laid across them, reminded me of one of the mysterious Druidical monuments at Stonehenge. For a time I racked my brain in a futile effort to conjecture for what purpose this table was used, only to be subsequently told that it was intended for the reception of the daily watermelon that Charles was in the habit of ordering up from the cool depths of the ice-house, and consuming just before dinner, when, in midsummer, he would come in, hot and fatigued, from the plantation.

Immediately outside of the mansion grounds, and near the back entrance to them, was a large two-story, brick stable, flanked on each side by a one-story, brick wing. The body of the building contained enough stalls for some twelve or fifteen horses, and the wings provided shelter for the family carriage

and other vehicles required by the needs of the Morotoc household, and also for the harness and stable equipment associated with these different vehicles. Close at hand were the cow-stable and chicken-house, and three dwellings, two of which were of brick, occupied by some of the house servants. The frame one stood almost under the very eaves of the stable, and was the home of Henry Lewis. All of them were in a line with one another, and they were known as 'The Street'; and, several hundred yards to the east of the one farthest from the stable, and situated at the eastern foot of the hill, which the three shared with the mansion, was another brick dwelling — the home of the gardener, who looked after the vegetable garden and the orchards from which the mansion house derived its supply of vegetables and fruit of all sorts. In the apple orchard was every kind of apple — from the big horse apple, coarse as a Percheron, to the white-and-red-tinted little

apple, known as the 'lady-finger,' which is, indeed, as dainty and rosy as the tips of a young girl's hand.

In other words, relying for its fresh beef, corned beef, mutton, fresh pork, hams, sausage, souse, lard, fowls, eggs, milk, butter, ice, vegetables, fresh fruit, dried fruit, preserves, vinegar, corn meal and hominy, and still other things wholly upon its own internal resources, Morotoc, like the famous crow of General Philip H. Sheridan, when flying over the devastated Valley of Virginia, carried its own rations with it. The nearest market towns to it were Norfolk, some one hundred and sixty-five miles away; Richmond, some ninety miles off; Lynchburg, some forty miles, and Danville, some thirty-five miles; and from no station upon any railroad leading to any one of these towns was it less distant than fifteen miles. During the slave period, a large part even of the clothing worn by the plantation slaves was the product of cotton and

wool grown on the property, and converted on it into garments by slave labor, with the assistance of the rude spinning-wheels and looms employed in household manufacture in Southside Virginia at that time.

Charles Cabell was a highly proficient farmer, at once a complete master of all the theoretical knowledge obtainable in his day from standard works upon agriculture and the possessor of the nice practical insight into the actual requirements of his vocation, which can be acquired only by personal experience. His stable contained not a few fine animals, with a strain of thoroughbred blood in them, which had either been raised on his own pastures or been purchased by him from the Kentucky drovers who frequently passed through Charlotte County with their choice strings of blue-grass geldings and mares. His stable would have been a still better one but for the discouragement that he constantly encountered in his efforts to improve it because

of the low standards of order and neatness that marked an industrial organization based upon listless, ignorant labor.

The cow-stable at Morotoc, it must be admitted, fell distinctly short of the ideal of the old breeder, who, upon being asked when one should begin to prepare a steer for market, replied, 'You should begin with his grandfather.' It was devoid of the appointments that give so fastidious an aspect to the modern dairy, and Charles' milch cows, partly, perhaps, by reason of the fact that cattle provender of every sort was very abundant and cheap on his plantation, would have stood the test of a quantitative analysis much more readily than the test of a qualitative. I heard him say on one occasion, in his humorous way, that one of them was so abnormally underweight that he felt almost equal to the task of catching her by the tail and swinging her around his head. However, with the great number of fresh cows that he could assemble

at pleasure, there was no lack of milk. So true, indeed, was this that once, when I was apparently hesitating at his table about accepting a second glass of milk, he assured me that I could have milk instead of water for my bath, if such should be my will.

In addition to the servant quarters near the stable, there were others on a hill separated from the hill, on which the mansion was erected, by the ravine in which the ice-ponds and 'The House Spring' were situated. This hill was known as 'The Back Hill,' and scattered over its surface were nine cabins, each with its hen-house, pig-pen, and garden plot. Most of these cabins contained only two rooms, one downstairs and one — if anything but an 'attic' it could be called — upstairs, and the dwellings were all so loosely constructed (though all furnished with excellent stone foundations and chimneys) as to be far from weather-tight. The air of the region was, however, mild, firewood was

plenteous, and the mansion itself was deficient in many conveniences that would now be regarded as indispensable. Some of the cabins were occupied by house servants and others by plantation hands, including the plantation carpenter and plantation stone-mason.

On the hill west of the two I have mentioned, was another cabin in which the dairy-woman lived. The truth is that Charles had so many servants that I never did obtain an exhaustive census of them. His plea was that domestic service in that part of the world was so inefficient that the only satisfactory plan was to have two persons doing the work of one. On this principle, he employed even three cooks, one to cook breakfast and supper, one to cook dinner, and one to make desserts.

'Why not?' he said to me on one occasion. 'What they cost me in house-rent and fuel is like the duty that your New England system of Protection imposes upon my clothes.

It is not sensibly felt; and the actual money that I pay the three, under the peculiar economic conditions of Southside Virginia, is, perhaps, not more than you would pay one in Boston. And each is the happier,' he added, 'for not having to toil in my hot kitchen all the day through.'

Charles had, of course, the usual quota of servants to wait at table, and to take care of the rooms in the mansion, the conservatory, the flower garden, the vegetable garden, the stable, the cow-stable, the hen-house, and the remaining ramifications of his wide-branching establishment. But, in addition to these, he had still others with duties so limited or ill-defined that I could hardly refrain from smiling when I was told of some of them. One, old Israel — a very black man, with a shrewd, sagacious face, softened at times by the play of quick, humorous instincts — was apparently charged with no duty except that of lying in wait for hawks and supplying

Charles' table with wild turkeys and wild geese; while Charles himself was supplying it so regularly every day with quail as to be in a position to contradict scornfully the well-known statement that it is impossible for any one to eat a broiled quail every day for a month. After Appomattox, when marauders from both armies were prowling about the country, Charles buried all his silver plate in the heart of a forest on his property in a pit dug by Israel and himself, and known only to them; unless it was known also, as is not unlikely, to Phœbe, Israel's wife, who, as the mammy of Charles' children, occupied a place in their affections second only to that occupied by the Mistress herself.

One day, while I was at Morotoc, I asked a colored woman, whom I met on the colonnade, what her duties were.

'I picks de chickens,' she replied, with an old-fashioned curtsy.

On another occasion, when I asked the same

question of a small girl I saw moving about in the august wake of the Mistress, she answered: 'I finds Mistis' keys for her when she loses dem.'

I even heard an improbable story to the effect that, when some one, impelled by a motive I have forgotten, called out to a young girl, who had been a visitor for some time at Morotoc, to run, one of the house servants observed reproachfully: 'Do'an yer know dat 'Nervy Ann does all her runnin' for her?'

The fundamental infirmity in the economic organization of the ante-bellum South was the fact that it was too easy for a white boy or girl to get some negro man or woman to do something for him or her that it would have been well for him or her to have done for himself or herself.

Occasionally a merely nominal duty was imposed by Charles' kind heart upon some aged dependent as a pretended return for a small monthly pension. Such a dependent

was an ancient woman whom I observed several times engaged about the task that he had set her of each day putting into and out of operation, with a stick, the hydraulic ram at Morotoc.

CHAPTER III

THE MANSION AND ITS GROUNDS

THE prospect from the front porch of the mansion was a very commanding and striking one. From the summit of the latter, on a clear day, the serrated crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains, some forty miles or more away, stood out upon the horizon like the blue veins under a delicate and transparent skin. These were the nearest mountains to Morotoc, except the row of mountains near Lynchburg, known naturally enough in that home of the tobacco hill as the Tobacco Row Mountains.

'I'se a gret trav'ler, I is,' one of Charles' hands was once heard to say, 'I'se even bin beyant de Terbacker Row Mountings.'

And then, if my informant was not fabling, emboldened by the effect that the startling announcement had upon his auditors, the Marco Polo of this story did not hesitate to affirm,

with a queer reversion to the classic Polyphemus, that, in his wanderings, he had even come to a land where the folks had only one eye, and that in the middle of their foreheads.

'Dey was a curosome people,' he declared, 'but dey was a very nice people,' he affably added.

From the same lofty vantage-ground — the turrets of Morotoc — the eye wandered in summer or autumn, in every direction, over vast seas of green or flaming foliage that seemed to stretch away into leafy infinity, with scarcely a break, except along the willow-clad banks of the Staunton. It was this immense expanse of encompassing greenwood that once led the Mistress to quote in my presence those well-known lines from 'The Task,' the poem that best accorded with her passionate love of country life, profound religious spirit, and rather stern cast of mind:

> Oh, for a lodge in some vast wilderness,
> Some boundless contiguity of shade,

Where rumour of oppression and deceit,
Of unsuccessful or successful war,
Might never reach me more!

But it was not necessary to ascend to the topmost turret of Morotoc to gratify the vision. A direct view of the river and its low-grounds from the front porch of the mansion was cut off by the grove between the iron gates and the great house, but, looking westward from the front porch across a long sweep of tree-tops, at eve the eye could expatiate, at leisure, over a broad field of open sky, which displayed to the best advantage the glorious dyes in which the splendor of the sun expires, or, sinking below the sky-line, it could rest upon a lengthy reach of the river which, at that distance, was contracted into the semblance of a shining mirror or shield.

Looking eastward, the eye, after descending to the foothills, which died away in the valley of the Staunton, was rewarded by the great alluvial plain, created by the junction of the

Staunton River and Turnip Creek. Steeped in a rich chocolate color in the spring, when cleared of cornstalks and dead weeds, and prepared for seed corn; concealed from sight a little later by a vivid mass of green, healthy young corn plants, and still later overspread by an array of brown, full-grown cornstalks, which reminded an observer, as I have intimated, of a mighty host marshalled for some fateful Armageddon, that bounteous champaign was from one end of the year to the other an unceasing delight to the beholder. Its fertility, from time to time renewed by the nitrogenous sediment deposited on it by floods freighted with spoils from forest-floors and limestone ledges, may be inferred from the fact that, when I was at Morotoc, it had probably been in corn every year for at least a hundred years, without an ounce of barnyard manure or artificial fertilizer ever having been placed upon it in all that time.

Aside from the pathways, along which the

sight traveled to these landscapes, the mansion grounds proper — some six or seven acres in extent perhaps — were walled in on every side by solid ramparts of oaks and other forest trees, except within the confines of the grove between the iron gates and the mansion. The floor of this grove was kept free of underbrush, weeds, and leaves, and the open spaces between the oaks and other forest trees scattered through it gave it the appearance, as was designed, of a formal park.

The woods, by which the house-grounds were encircled, ran back in every direction to quite a high, regularly shaped wall, about a mile and a half long, and constructed by slave labor of stone slabs filled in with smaller stone fragments; all of which material was quarried on the plantation. Even beyond the boundary created by this wall, considerable bodies of woods were kept sacred from the axe, though not maintained with the same scrupulous care as the woods within the wall. One of the fea-

tures of these demesnes was a walk, known as 'The Lover's Walk,' which, beginning at the family graveyard, at the western end of the mansion grounds, twisted its way (partly within and partly without the area enclosed by the stone wall) along an extended and sinuous course, which finally brought it back to a point in the house grounds at some distance from the spot at which it started off. At one place, this walk led over a rustic bridge thrown across a romantic ravine between 'The House Spring' and the mansion grounds, and, everywhere along its track, there were restful seats or dim bowers well-calculated to give the *coup de grâce* to a vacillating swain struggling against his inevitable fate.

The mansion grounds proper were laid out in cunning roads and walks, and were planted with many species of trees, indigenous and exotic, by a Scotch landscape gardener of rare skill. And, when I speak of these grounds, I include a semi-circular flower garden, placed

right against a dense background of forest trees, parcelled off into many flower beds of different shapes, but all so formed and arranged as to anticipate too much rigid formality in the total effect. In this garden flourished all the flowers that ordinarily grow in a garden in Southern Virginia, such as the iris, the peony, the sweet william, the phlox, the zinnia, the marigold, the dahlia and the chrysanthemum. But none of these exceeded in profusion the rose, which seems to thrive in that part of Virginia as vigorously as its most pestiferous weed, and can, by proper diversification, be made to keep up a perpetual succession of bloom from spring until frost. In various portions of the mansion grounds, were beds full of flowering vines, including the lovely coral honeysuckle, that grows wild at Morotoc, shrubs and trees which vied with the flower garden in color, and, here and there in them were to be seen, along with splendid specimens of native trees, foreign evergreens

of uncommon beauty. My attention was especially arrested by a silvery deodar and several perfectly balanced cedars of Lebanon.

There was a story told about the deodar that gave me an interesting sidelight into the workings of human nature. Its graceful top was snapped off by one of those tremendous storms which at times, in summer, lash the vast woods around Morotoc until their agonized limbs and branches roar like a tortured wild beast. The Mistress was standing on the front porch of the mansion with a governess who was then teaching under the Morotoc roof.

'That lovely deodar is ruined, ruined, hopelessly ruined,' moaned the Mistress.

'It is indeed,' said the tactless governess.

'The stupid thing!' exclaimed the Mistress under her breath.

But of all the trees in those grounds the *magnolia grandiflora* and the *crêpe* myrtle, in my estimation, bore away the bell.

Even the climate of Southern Virginia is not temperate enough to enable the *magnolia grandiflora* to propagate itself readily except behind some protecting wall or in some sheltered pocket in the forest. But transplanted, when of goodly height, it waxes rapidly in growth, and lives to an advanced age, and, with its evergreen, enameled leaves, white chalices and red seed-sacs (to say nothing of the sweet but rather languorous redolence exhaled by its flowercups), is a glorious object. Its only defect is the liability of its heavy, leaf-laden branches to fracture in tempests or under the burden of the sleet, which sometimes converts its foliage into a miracle of prismatic brilliancy.

The *crêpe* myrtle, like the magnolia, is a devotee of the sun, and grows only reluctantly north of Virginia. In Southside Virginia, however, its groups of cane-like stems shoot up to a very considerable height, and, when covered with clouds of white, purple, or pink blossoms

— as in the Morotoc grounds — present a spectacle of sensuous magnificence such as is rarely seen outside of the tropics; and this superb efflorescence, be it recollected, lasts for weeks.

The interior, too, of the mansion merits description. The front door opened immediately into a polygonal vestibule paved with alternate blocks of black and white marble, and containing four niches in its walls occupied by as many graceful Greek figures in bronzed plaster. A grotesque sun-face of bronze looked down from the center of its groined ceiling upon its marble floor, but with only sickly power; for even upon the sultriest day the atmosphere of this room was refreshingly cool.

On the left side of the vestibule, was a door that opened into the front drawing-room — a spacious apartment, with a high, tastefully moulded ceiling, several large Gothic, gilt-framed mirrors, some fine rosewood furniture, quite a number of good paintings and hand-

some articles of virtu, including a tall Italian urn of bronze, with pictured bas-reliefs, and three striking marble busts: one a bust of the Mistress, true as life itself to her clear-cut, sculptured features.

Beyond the front drawing-room, and connected with it by a high, arched doorway, with folding-doors always flung back, was the middle drawing-room, which was very much like the front drawing-room in point of form and contents, except that, unlike the latter, it had two bay windows effectively finished off with stained window-glass scenes, depicted in bright but chaste colors.

Back of the middle drawing-room, and connected with it by a similar arched doorway, was the library, which I have already mentioned. Its light other than what it derived from the middle drawing-room filtered into it through stained glass, its ceiling was richly moulded, and its walls were covered with Gothic bookshelves, filled mainly with ele-

gantly bound English and French classics, which Charles had bought in London. On the summit of one set of bookshelves stood a plaster bust of George Washington, and, on another, a similar bust of Daniel Webster, from whom, because of the concessions he was disposed to make to the sectional claims of the South for the sake of national unity, the heart of the South never became totally estranged.

On the right side of the vestibule, a door opened into Charles' bed-chamber, which was furnished in rosewood, and adorned by several family portraits from the hand of Sully, whose 'Italian Girl,' by the way, hung upon the walls of the middle drawing-room. Beyond this bed-chamber and its dressing-room, was the nursery which communicated with the back hall of the mansion, and extended to the walls of the pantry and pantry store-room on the back porch.

Directly beyond the vestibule, and com-

municating with it by folding-doors, which were usually kept open, was the front hall. A door at its further end led into the dining-room, which faced on the back porch and the flower garden. Beside this door, on a rose-wood, marble-covered table stood a silver ice pitcher, flanked by two very tall silver pitchers, and grouped with four or five silver goblets. This pitcher, under the systematic management of the Mistress, flowed ice-water perpetually both summer and winter.

At the other end of the hall, just by the door-way between it and the vestibule, a winding staircase on each side, guarded by a mahog-any balustrade, climbed up to the second floor of the mansion. Here there were three rooms in front, two bedrooms and a small library be-tween them, stored with children's books and light but wholesome fiction; and three rooms in the back — all bedrooms. The library was lighted by stained glass in Gothic frames, and so was the bedroom, known as 'The Tower

Room,' above it on the third floor of the mansion.

Beneath the mansion was a deep, extensive cellar, temperate in winter and deliciously cool in summer, which contained a considerable number of rooms, chiefly used for storage purposes. One of these was a wine-room, well stocked with old madeira, sherry and brandy. It was windowless, and, except when its door was opened, was as inky black as the earth itself before the birth of light.

The external proportions of Morotoc were very noble and imposing, and its interior was, in many respects, marked by uncommon refinement of taste and feeling; but it lacked, of course, many conveniences that would be regarded at the present time as necessary in such a mansion. It had no lights but kerosene lamps; no furnace but open fires, unless I except a small wood furnace in its cellar, the heat from which warmed Charles' chamber, but perished in despair before it reached the

middle drawing-room, which it was also expected to warm; no mechanical contrivance for sawing up the split logs in the wood-house, where the monotonous sound of the axe rarely ceased between sunrise and sunset; and no bathtubs in the modern sense of the term, but one in the dressing-room next to Charles' chamber, and another — a huge affair in the bathroom on the colonnade, fashioned out of a single block of marble. The only bathtubs in the dressing-rooms attached to the bedrooms upstairs were large tin hat-tubs, with deep crowns and wide brims, which were supplied by means of tin or wooden vessels with cold water from the column of water pushed up to the first floor of the mansion by the hydraulic ram (or, the ram failing, as it often did in the capricious manner of such mechanisms, from a cistern near the conservatory), and with hot water from several great bricked-up cauldrons on the colonnade.

In other words, in many essential particu-

lars, Morotoc was wanting in elements of material comfort that are to-day enjoyed in the United States by thousands of individuals of very moderate means. But in this respect it probably did not differ greatly from many such country-seats in other parts of America at that time.

The forenoon of the day after my arrival at Morotoc was consumed by me in making myself acquainted with the mansion and its environs under Charles' guidance. We were in Virginia, and, as far back as the Colonial Era, a Virginian was defined as a man who would walk a mile to catch a horse in order to ride a half-mile; but the circuit we traversed was made altogether on foot. And this notwithstanding the fact that Charles, also, was too much of a Virginian to have any keen relish for pedestrian exertion, except when shooting; on which occasions he was as indefatigable as a beagle. In the prosecution of his pursuits on his plantation (which was divided into three

tracts, with a complete, separate organization — overseer and all — for each), it was impossible for him to describe each day the entire circle of his agricultural and mechanical operations otherwise than on horseback; and it was natural that every animal, which bore him about, as he passed in a leisurely fashion from one point to another on the plantation, sooner or later became more or less sway-backed. Sometimes the Master of Morotoc would stop for a few minutes to watch with a keen, searching eye his carpenter or mason at work; or to look in at the smithy, where his blacksmith was beating out sparks in showers from a hot tire, or other piece of iron; or to note the progress of his ditchers; or to confer with one of his overseers, while a gang of hands were harvesting wheat, or worming tobacco plants. Occasionally he would tie his horse to the rack in front of 'the store' on his property and go inside, and have a chat with its proprietor — a social, witty Irish-Ameri-

can, who was a sort of clearing-house for all the neighborhood gossip and humor — or with its customers. Each of these visits, which were eagerly encouraged by the Morotoc household, was certain to be followed by one or two good additions to Charles' stock of ludicrous incidents and utterances. Some of his neighbors, such as the Carringtons, the Rices, the Edmundses, and the Dennises, whom he met at this store, belonged to the class of landed gentry who owned the larger farms along the river, and were faithful exponents of the intelligence and public spirit that gave Virginia for such a long time her position of political primacy in the American Union. Others belonged to the class of small landowners, or yeomanry, who lived on the 'ridge,' as it was called, back from the river, or to the class known as 'poor whites.' The members of this last landless class were illiterate and in many respects painfully stationary; but Charles, while fully alive to their deficiencies, and to the shortcomings

of the economic system responsible for these deficiencies, never tired of dilating upon their simple, manly virtues, their independence of character, their honesty, their high standard of personal courage, their inexorable standard of female chastity.

'What was Abraham Lincoln himself,' he would say, 'but a Southern "poor white," born in the same State — Kentucky — as the Southern aristocrat, Jefferson Davis?'

The highly stratified organization of Southern society could not be so bad, Charles thought, when two such great, yet sharply contrasted, men could be produced by its lower and upper levels respectively. And, aloof as he was placed by his social position and racial status from the humble blacks, many an interchange of friendly conversation between him and negroes, whom he met at this store, as well as elsewhere, produced a rich fruitage of stories, which he told with a kindly and contagious pleasantry that it was

difficult to excel. During my stay at Morotoc, the Irish-American, just mentioned, recalled an incident typical of the lack of all malice, which was one of the most delightful traits of Charles' humor. Upon repeatedly finding one of his tenants hanging about the store, when he should have been busy with his tobacco crop, Charles awakened his latent sense of shame by telling him, with a smiling face, that he ought to procure a hoe for himself, equipped with a handle long enough to enable him to sit on the front steps of the store and to hill up his tobacco plants three miles away.

CHAPTER IV

HOME LIFE AT MOROTOC

After dinner on the day ensuing my arrival at Morotoc, Charles asked me to excuse him, saying that he had some pressing business to attend to in 'The Office,' and that he would commit me, during his absence, to the good graces of the Mistress (who had recovered from her indisposition) and Ellen. This announcement was soon followed by the subsequent withdrawal of the Mistress from the library on the plea that she had letters to write; and Ellen and myself, for the first time, found ourselves entirely alone. But she had her preoccupations, too.

'You shall not think, Captain Endicott,' she said, 'that I am the only idler in this house. You probably entertain the idea that a Southern girl has nothing more serious to do than to gather roses or to listen to her own vain tongue.

Hannah, Charles' chambermaid, who lives on "The Back Hill," has a very sick child, and he has sent for the doctor to see it, and I am anxious to be at her home when he comes. So I, too, am obliged to excuse myself for a short time.'

And then, as if the qualification were altogether an afterthought, she dispelled the look of disappointment that beclouded my features by adding, with a playful glance:

'Unless Captain Endicott cares to accompany me and to wait for me at Hannah's door, while I am conferring with her and the doctor; in which event there might be time enough, after we leave Hannah's home, to come back to the mansion by the way of "The Lover's Walk."'

My acceptance of this invitation must have been eagerly prompt and earnest; for, as Ellen went on to get her hat and gloves, the playful glance returned to her face.

Before I left Morotoc, I came to know

Hannah well. It was her special duty to look after everything that immediately affected the personal comfort of either Charles or the Mistress in their home. She had a brown skin and regular features, a soft hand, under which a linen sheet took on the smoothness of silk, and a honied voice that soothed restlessness like an old, well-worn slipper. When Charles, after coming in from the plantation shortly before dinner, was enjoying his brief midsummer *siesta*, she would move about the adjoining rooms in such a noiseless manner that a mouse in a nearby corner would hardly cease his stealthy nibbling. Charles often said that her light-footed step and dulcet, low-pitched accents operated as a sort of sedative upon his nerves after the jar of an active day. She entertained strong race prejudices. On one occasion, when the Mistress suggested that some of the colored women on the plantation might make a little additional money by washing for a white tenant or so, she opened her

bland lips just wide enough to say with unmistakable emphasis:

'Dey won't wash fer dem.'

But no one could have been more steadfastly, not to say romantically, loyal to Charles and the Mistress and their sons and daughters than was Hannah. She was a little more partial to the daughters than to the sons. That was natural enough; but neither, as between the several daughters, nor, as between the several sons, was she ever known to exhibit the slightest favoritism. They were all offshoots of one cherished parental stock; all inmates of one sacred house. Once she lost all of her savings through the failure of a petty local bank. Subsequently, when the Mistress happened to be rummaging through the mansion, she came across a tin box on a high closet-shelf in which Hannah had deposited her more recent savings. The good soul had placed them there as a barn-swallow might build his nest under the eaves of a protecting

temple. The mansion reflected all her limited ideas of stability and permanence — too time-honored to be consumed by fire, too hedged in by reverence and awe to be despoiled by burglars: a stately sanctuary into which no destructive nor predatory agency would ever dare to intrude.

One day, while I was at Morotoc, I met her coming down the colonnade as I was coming up the white clay walk beside it. I forgot to say that all the roads and walks in the mansion grounds were surfaced with a layer of hard, white clay, which was not only grateful to the sight but kept more or less firm under foot even during wet weather. The result of our meeting was a conversation in which I asked her many questions about the plantation and the people who inhabited it.

'Do any of the old servants ever leave Morotoc?' was one of these questions.

'None,' she replied simply, 'ever leaves Marster 'cep' de dead.'

Ellen and I descended the steep path that all but dropped from the ice-house to 'The House Spring,' and ascended the path that climbed up to Hannah's home on 'The Back Hill.' The doctor had not yet come. He lived far away, and sometimes, when he appeared on the plantation after plodding for miles through seas of mud, his patient, like Lady Macbeth, was apt to be more in need of the divine than the physician. This doctor was a powerful, kindly man before whose ruddy face — deeply embrowned by all kinds of weather, and bearing every evidence of robust health — disease might well have slunk away abashed, but it had much less cause, I should imagine, to dread his skill, which was to no small degree restricted to the crude *materia medica* of the primitive fields and forests over which his professional peregrinations carried him.

'He's not a bad doctor, but yer has to eat a bushel of his roots to git a dose of his med'cine,'

was the complaint of one of his more querulous negro patients. However, there was not much choice between him and the rival physician whom Charles personally employed. There were special reasons, involving considerations of good feeling, why he should employ the latter, but he had no great amount of confidence in his knowledge of the medical art. Ellen once told me that he underwent quite a mental struggle before adopting him for better or for worse, and finally, after balancing all the conflicting elements of the case, threw himself back in his chair and said resolutely:

'I shall have to stand by him' — and then, as the humor of the situation stole over him, added, '*and fall* by him.'

When Ellen and I reached Hannah's doorstep, Ellen entered the house, leaving me outside to await her return. In a few minutes she came back, her face full of tender compassion, to tell me that the child seemed to be dangerously ill, and to express over and over again

her hope that the doctor would soon come. As time wore on, apprehension and impatience were written upon every line of her countenance. Hannah had issued from the house shortly after Ellen did, and both had taken up positions beside its chimney, where they could look up and down the road by which the doctor and his saddle-bags had to arrive.

'Why does he not come?' Ellen repeatedly exclaimed.

For a time Hannah listened to these exclamations without a word; though there was moisture in her eyes and an occasional twitch about the corners of her mouth; I all the time as completely lost to the consciousness of the pair as if I had no existence. Gradually Hannah's anxiety about her child was merged into sympathy for her fellow-sufferer.

'Miss Ellen,' she said gently, with just a trace of reproach in her voice, 'oughtn't we to leave sumfin' to de Lord?'

Shortly afterwards the doctor appeared, and

gave Hannah the consolatory assurance that the patient, while ill, was not critically so, and Ellen, after inquiring of him whether there was any service she could render, and being told there was none, went off with me towards the mansion.

A little later we attained 'The Lover's Walk,' near 'The House Spring,' and, side by side, we slowly followed its loop reversely, through the hushed woods and the thickening dusk, until it conducted us to 'The Grove,' and thence to its point of beginning at the little graveyard. At first, under the impressions made upon her mind by Hannah's sick child, Ellen was a trifle pensive, but soon the natural elasticity of her temperament asserted itself, and she was again all instinctive dignity and sportive grace, passing with a light but sure touch from one fleeting topic to another, breaking out at times into a gay laugh, as fresh and liquid as the trill of a wood-thrush in the hollow behind the Morotoc ice-house,

and ever and anon bringing to bear upon me the momentary blandishments, as delicate as the subtle fragrance of the wild grape in the spring, of the innocent coquetry which made a Virginia beauty of that day (when a man was simply a man and a woman was simply a woman) so faultlessly true to sex and such a merciless witch.

At dinner Ellen had come to know me well enough even to ply me with good-natured raillery at the expense of my New England origin and training, contrasting the 'sorrel horse' of the Staunton River, a highly unpalatable fish, with the cod, very much to the disadvantage of the latter, and insisting that I should never have had any occasion to win the title of Captain, if the civilization of New England had been sufficiently advanced to prefer black-eye peas, a *légume* for which the Virginian cherishes a wholly inexplicable partiality, to baked beans.

And *à propos* of the general diffusion of

education in New England, she told me a good story about a kindly New England sergeant, who had been posted, with a squad of men, at Morotoc, at the close of the Civil War, and had discharged his duty in such a humane and considerate manner as to win the lasting gratitude of its household, and to cause Charles to be even so communicative with him as to inform him one day, as a matter of interesting intelligence to an inhabitant of the section of the United States, where it was safe to presume that the humblest citizen was thoroughly familiar with American history, that Patrick Henry had resided only six miles from Morotoc.

'Patrick Henry?' said the puzzled sergeant. 'He was quite an influential man in your locality, I guess.'

While all this *badinage* was going on, Charles was laughing as heartily as I, but the Mistress looked very grave and troubled. She was endowed with a highly developed moral

nature, marked resolution of character, an uncommon capacity for deep-seated affection, and a rarely cultivated intellect that despised all forms of intellectual trash. She loved neatness and cleanliness and good housewifery in all its forms; and, under the sway of her firm will and well-ordered intelligence, the whole domestic machinery of the mansion worked with a flawless rhythm. But humor was not one of her strong points. It was too often employed, she declared in her uncompromising way, as a mere cloak for the gratification of malice. Only twice did she ever disclose a sense of humor in my presence. The first time was when she told me, with a slight relaxation of her features, how, just as she was destroying a dirt-dauber that had built its mud nest behind a framed piece of cardboard hanging on a wall in her dressing room, her attention was called to the fact that worked in worsted on its face was the pious invocation, 'God bless our Home.' The second time was when she recalled

a question put by one of Charles' neighbors, who was reading a well-thumbed newspaper at 'the store,' to another sitting near him:

'What is meant by mean time?' he asked.

'Well,' was the reply, 'I reckon about four o'clock in the morning, when you are obliged to rise at that hour.'

Nor did the Mistress care for music, though Charles passionately adored it. In that respect, she was like her brother, one of the leaders of the Southern Confederacy, who once confessed to Charles that there was no difference to him between music and any other noise, except that music was perhaps the most disagreeable of all noises to him because of its regularly recurring, monotonous beat.

The nice refinement of Charles' nature enabled him without difficulty studiously to respect all the peculiarities of the Mistress that differed from his own, and to find an ample field for the indulgence of his unselfish, loving instincts in the deep, underlying con-

geniality of attributes and tastes which linked the two together in an indestructible relationship. When he entered, in his vivacious way, upon some general subject, such as marital infelicity, which he knew was a touchy topic with the Mistress, it was amusing to see how cautiously he would keep his eye upon her — as might a physician feeling the pulse of his patient to see how much ether he will stand — to note the first intimation of dissatisfaction in her countenance. And it was even more amusing to see how, as soon as one of these danger-signals told him that he was going too far, he would suddenly whip off into an entirely different conversational direction. She was very much the creature of sentiment, especially in every respect that related to the province of marriage, motherhood, religion, or the Southern Confederacy; and her strong character did not readily brook any impingement upon feelings that had for her all the force of sanctity.

'A marriage veil, a tress from the still temples of a first-born child, a button from the coat that General Lee wore at Appomattox means even more to her, perhaps,' Ellen once said to me, 'than it does to most of us foolish women.'

After supper, all of us went off to the library as we had done the night before. Charles and I got back to Harvard again, and he had something warmly laudatory to say, too, as he often did, about the salutary rigor with which law and order were enforced in Massachusetts, the splendid industrial organizations that her intelligent people had built up from a foundation of frost and rock, and the enlightened spirit which had early in her history made education within her limits a public common instead of a mere nobleman's park.

While Charles and I discussed these and other topics, the Mistress remained silent. To say nothing more, she was usually reserved

except when absolutely sure of her company, and she always followed Charles' talk so intently that, even when he told a sterling story that he had been telling for the last ten years, it was impossible ever to draw from her an admission that she had heard it before. Ellen, too, was uncommonly meditative. Perhaps, she was wondering whether Charles did not think that she had gone too far at dinner in making fun of New England cod and beans, and their tributary system of general popular education; or, perhaps, she was musing over the probable consequences of our next perambulation around 'The Lover's Walk.'

On the other side of the center table, under the light of a large student's lamp, Charles' two boys, James and David, were engaged in a 'losing' game of draughts. They were seeing which of them could 'lose' the game most successfully; the only form of competition, so far as I am aware, in which success consists not in splitting knots but in keeping to the easy,

natural grain of human misfortune. The game came to an end, and one of the boys, David, too listless to care to renew it, abruptly spoke up and inquired:

'Father, why do you not read your "Prayer for Rain" to Captain Endicott?'

Charles was taken wholly aback for a moment, for he had written this story exclusively for the amusement of his family circle, and did not even know where the manuscript was; but the Mistress, you may be sure, did, and, between my persuasion, a coaxing look from Ellen, and an 'Oh! do, Mr. Cabell,' from the Mistress, which was in itself tantamount to a command, he was compelled to read the story aloud. It was in these words:

'It was a long summer afternoon, or evening, as they say in Southside Virginia. There had been no rain for weeks. The sky looked as hard and brazen as the surface of a copper kettle, and the grass was

so sere that it seemed to have perished to its very roots. There was widespread alarm among all the farmers in the country, white and black. Prayers for rain had been freely offered up in the churches of the white people, but it was clear that, whatever might be the attitude of the Lord of the winds and the rain towards his Ethiopian children, he was not inclined to grant the petitions of their Caucasian brethren.

'Only one resource was left. Old Dandridge had not yet lifted up his stentorian voice in coaxing and tearful supplications towards the heavenly fountains; but he had not been unmindful of the situation. Day after day, he had looked for prognostics of a coming storm, and, night after night, he had scanned the disk of the moon as it rode through the cloudless firmament. He believed in the efficacy of prayer, but he also believed that all the

manifestations of the divine will are preceded by visible signs. Finally, he had announced that this very evening he would see whether what had been denied to the entreaties of the proud and powerful might not be vouchsafed to his humble intercession.

'The small frame building was packed with a mass of earnest and anxious auditors, and I found a seat in one of the corners of the room, after entering it with Dandridge, and observing him take a confirmatory glance towards the southwest just as he turned the corner of the building.

'"O Lord," he began, "we dat is 'sembled here is mis'rable sinners. Our hearts is ez dry an' dusty ez de road in front of dis do', an', if we got our deserts, dere nuvver would be no mo' rain till our tongues were ez black from thirst ez de breast of dis chimbley. We'se sheeps dat

done strayed from de parsture. We'se chilluns dat done forgot our father. But, O Lord, I rikollek dat old Marster once said dat 'tis easier for one father to take keer of thirteen chilluns dan 'tis for thirteen chilluns to take keer of one father, an' dough, of all dem dat is here, dere is not one dat has not sinned in yo' sight, dey is not so many dat yo' long-suff'rin' luv cannot make atonement for dem all. It can't be, O Lord, dat dis drout has 'scaped yo' 'tention. Sholy, if you see ev'ry sparrow dat falls to de groun', you done take notice of dis mon-s'ous dry weather. Ole Israel is de oldes' man in dese parts, an' he sez he nuvver hearn tell of any sich drout befo'. De springs is low, de streams done dwindle away, de corn is sickly an' twisted, de terbacker is floppin' to de groun', even de leaves on de trees is hangin' to 'em ez if dey didn't know whedder to drap or not.

If you do'an come to our relief soon, 'twill not be in yo' power to come to our relief at all. Pour down, derefore, O Lord, yo' refreshin' draps upon us. Not one of dem triflin' showers dat barely lays de dus', an' do no mo' dan a good-sized jew, but a hard, studdy rain dat goes down to de botternmost roots of de corn an' de terbacker, an' makes 'em stan' up stiff an' strong an' ez full of life an' growth ez I hope dat dese souls may be of yo' sperrit. But not too hard a rain, O Lord — much ez we wants to see dem clouds open once mo'. Dat Staunton River an' dat Turnip Creek rise moughty easy, an' you knows dat dat piece of terbacker groun' dat I got on Turnip Creek done cost me a lot of labor an' is all dat I have to count on dis year. But, O Lord, you kin manage de case widout any advice from us. All de strings dat control de floods is in yo' han's. You kin pull one, an' dere would be nuffin'

but a gentle drizzle; you kin pull anoder an' we could not have done de job better for de corn an' de terbacker if we had had de doin' of it ourselves; but dere is still anoder an' a turrible string, O Lord, an', if you pull dat, den good-bye to all our hopes. Dat river will come down a-rippin' and a-roarin' from de mountings, an' kiver over dem low-groun's same ez a sheet. Regilation is de thing, O Lord, an' ez you is de Gret Regilator, you ought ter be able to renew our craps an' yit at de same time keep dem fractious streams in dere banks. Show mercy unto us den, O Lord! Pile up dem gret black clouds of yourn in de soufwes', let yo' lightnin' skip about 'em, blow dem over dis way wid yo' bref, an' den let dem dreen dereselves right down on our fields till de springs is full, an' de streams done got back dere strength, an' de corn done untwist itself, an' de terbacker done raise up its haid

once mo', an' de earth an' de trees, an' de grass, an' de yarbs is drenched till dey drunk; but not, O Lord, till dat fearsome river git its back up, an' go tarrin' aroun' agen. An' when you done do all dis, O Lord, let it be for a testimony dat you sometimes passes dem white preachers by an' keeps all dat water of yourn to yoursef till one of dese black ministers of yourn lif's up his outstretched han's to bring some of it down."

'As Dandridge uttered these words, he closed his eyes, and exalted his open palms above his head as if he was expecting the descent of a copious douche; and, curiously enough, just then there was a distant rumble of thunder in the southwest, the very quarter upon which he had fixed that confirmatory gaze of his before he entered the building. A tremor of hysterical emotion passed through his audience, as the welcome sound rolled

in upon their delighted ears. The women gave a suppressed scream, and the old men emitted deep groans.

"'Do'an yer hear dat, chilluns?" continued Dandridge, in exultant tones, which seemed to make him as much a part of the approaching storm as the electric fluid which was even now sporting with its lurid fringes. "Week arter week, week arter week, de win' been a-callin' an' a-callin' de rain, but de rain wouldn't cum, an' now, onwillin' as 'twas, pr'ar done make it cum. Who sez now dat dem white preachers is de onliest people dat can draw de rain down from dere cisterns? Who sez now dat Dandridge is so ole an' poly, an' his throat so cracked, dat he ain't got no mo' 'fluence over de heavens dan a dry-lan' tarrapin? Dar's yo' rain, chilluns!" This with a gesture so significant of the ease with which he had worked his miracle that the agency of

Providence in the matter appeared to be left out of the account altogether. "Dat ain't no dog scratchin' hissef on de front porch an' hittin' de flo' wid his tail, 'tain't no tramplin' of hosses' hoofs, 'tain't dem niggers wukkin' wid 'splosives on de river. 'Tis nuffin' less dan de voice of de Almighty answerin' de voice of his ole black sarvant, whar done try for so many years to keep dis onruly flock penned in safe from de perils of dis world."

'The confidence of the preacher was not misplaced. The meeting broke up, and all the portents of a heavy downpour greeted our eyes as we left the door of the little edifice. Over at Mr. Rice's in Halifax, the clouds were heaping up higher and higher, and in denser and denser masses of stygian blackness their solid bastions of vapor and fire. The air grew darker and darker until a sort of twilight

obscurity enveloped all things, and then followed a stillness as of death itself, succeeded in its turn, first, by a slight movement in the forest trees as if the gentler zephyrs of the air were fleeing from its ruder spirits, and then by the tumultuous agitation among the swaying branches, which told that the mad pursuers were close upon the heels of the pursued, and were bending every limb of the wood as though it were a bow for their destruction.

'But, thanks be to the favor that Dandridge had found in the sight of God, there was no hurt in that storm. The wind soon gave over his chase, and, when the teeming clouds, that he drew after him, had overspread the whole cope of the sky, they distilled only soft, life-giving blessings. Down came the first pattering forerunners of their vitalizing wine, rebounding from the dancing leaves,

subduing the rebellious dust, and eliciting from the arid ground and the withered grass that delicious fragrance characteristic of the first stages of a broken drouth, which is the sweetest of all the savours that the grateful earth sends up to the nostrils of its Creator. Then in due season ensued the long, hard, steady rain for which Dandridge had prayed so fervently and cautiously; bringing back to the cheek of all animated nature its wonted color; reviving the drooping crops; making Dandridge's tobacco ground a scene of thrift and promise; and yet stopping just short of the point of filling to overflowing the destructive urn of the Staunton River in which so many of his fond hopes had been drowned.'

As Charles finished his story, which I had laughed over too heartily to leave much occasion for more conventional commendation,

the same pertinacious boy spoke up again, and said:

'But that story is not so good as Father's "Mons'ous Fine Hoss."'

Once more Charles had to yield; this time, like a true member of the literary fraternity, whose self-confidence has been stimulated by recent applause, with noticeably less reluctance than before. The second story ran thus:

'As I was leaving Randolph, our station on the Richmond and Danville Railroad, for the plantation, a negro, sitting in his wagon, in front of Mr. Clark's store, saluted me with the inquiry, "How is you, Marse Charles?" I cast a searching glance at him, but, when he observed that I did not recognize him, he continued: "Do'an yer know me? I'se Milly's son." "Ah, indeed," I replied, with an affected revival of recollection, which might have done credit to histrionic powers far supe-

rior to mine. But, realizing that Milly had long faded from my memory, and that I could not be questioned about her without exciting distrust as to the strength of my attachment to former ties of good feeling, I shifted my eye abruptly to the horse hitched to the wagon, and remarked, "That is a fine horse of yours." "Does yer like him?" said John, for that was the name of Milly's son. "He's a fine hoss sho 'nuff, but he no sich mons'ous fine hoss as de one dat I had befo' him."

'My interest was piqued. "What has become of that horse?" I said. "Is he dead?" "Nah, sir," answered John, with a slight twitch about the corner of his mouth. "Dar's dem," he added oracularly, "dat is likely to die befo' he do. I sold him." "Why," I asked, "did you sell him, if he was such a fine horse?"

'"Well," said John, "'twas 'bout dis way. I bought dat hoss from a drover.

De fust time I seed him, 'peared to me like he was de grandest hoss dat ever was foaled, do I did notice dat he was sorter nervous-like, an' moved his ears about kinder curosome. He was tall an' slick, an' jes' so from de groun' up, an' he had a par of legs ez clean ez de stem of a young poplar. Ez for his disposition, dat drover said dat a child could go to sleep on his back. 'Bout a day or so arter I bought him, I was drivin' him to a buggy down de plantation road, dis side of de Clark Ferry, when a leetle black bull, dat was put out about sumfin', come bellowin' outer de bresh jes' 'longside of de road. Wid a big leap to get hissef started good, dat hoss, soon as he see dat bull, pitched down de road jes' as hard as he could clip it. He not only tuk de bit in his mouf, but 'peared to me like he had tuk de reins dere too. I mought jes' as well hev tried to hold on to de tip-eend of a streak of

lightnin'. So long as de road was open, I didn't feel so oneasy, bekase it was in de winter time, an' I knowed dat when dat heavy road was done wid dat hoss he wouldn't be so ambitious, but I remembered dat down at de Bouldin' line dere was a gate right 'cross de road, an' de nearer an' nearer we got to dat gate, de more an' more I axed myself whedder dat hoss was gwine ter wait fer me to open it. I warn't a-cogitatin' dat question long. When he reached de gate, he sailed over it jes' de same ez if he was a flyin' squir'l, bustin' de traces an' de hitchin' strops ez he went. De buggy didn't follow him, but I did. I landed right squar on my haid in de mud, an' I warn't much hurt, but, when I looked roun' for dat hoss, he done vanish. I cotched him in 'bout two weeks. 'I will get rid of dat hoss,' sez I. But, when I come to think it over, he was sich a

mons'ous fine hoss dat I sez to myself dat I will try him agen.

"'"'Bout a week later, I was drivin' him down de road from Cunnel Morton's to de place whar de road crosses de railroad track, when a bee got tangled in his ear an' stung him. Anoder leap like dat when he saw dat leetle black bull, an' away he went like shot out of a shovel! I had a big strong bit in his mouf dis time, an' I sawed his mouf so hard dat when I got to de railroad track I sawed him clar round 'til his face was tunned down de track. Bumpety, bump! Bumpety, bump! He was going down over dem sills like forty, wid a steep bank on eider side of him, when I hear an injine blow for de crossin'. When de injine seed us, it whistled 'down brakes!' an' de way de train hands scuffled to stop dat train was a caution. An' dey was jes' in time! De cold sweat was breakin' out on me like de

jew on de outside of a gourd of water in de summer time, when I managed to reach de eend of dat cut, an' to saw dat hoss off dat track an' into a leetle mash whar he couldn't go no furder, jes' ez de cow-ketcher of de injine cotched at de hine wheels of my wagon. Dat hoss was a mons'ous fine hoss, but, sez I den, I got too much on my mind to be projeckin' wid a hoss like dat. Somebody better own him what kin give all his 'tention to him.

'"So I concluded to sell dat hoss; but, knowin' dat it had got roun' through Charlotte and Halifax dat he was — well, a mons'ous fine hoss — I decided dat I would take him 'way down to Boydton in Mecklenburg, an' put him up at auction on cote day. Dis I did at de very next cote, an', if you had seen dat hoss, when de auctioneer was showin' him off, an' sayin' dat he was de peacefullest hoss in Souf-

side Ferginia, you would er thought dat a child could go to sleep on his back sho 'nuff, but, jes' ez a nice white-hyared gentleman, dat was taking to him, was 'zamining him, he begin to move dem ears a leetle bit, same as he done when I bought him from dat drover. 'What fer you sellin' dat hoss?' said dat gentleman, lookin' at me ez if he sorter 'spicioned me. I was anxious to sell de hoss, but I warn't gwine to tell dat nice white-hyared gentleman no lie; so I jes' says to him: 'Dat hoss do'an suit my convenience.'"'

My approval of this story, too, was evidenced by more than one hearty laugh while Charles was reading it, and I was almost prepared to acquiesce in the judgment that little David had passed upon its relative merits. The hour was quite early, but the Mistress knew that I had been on my feet all day, and again a polite suggestion from her dispersed

us for the night. I stopped long enough at the silver ice-pitcher to fill up a goblet with water for Ellen and to filch a look at her snowy throat as she held her head back for a moment to drink a part of its contents. 'So you liked Dandridge's prayer,' she said, as I parted with her for the night. 'Indeed I did,' I replied, 'and I only hope that he will take it into his head next time to pray for something more essential to my happiness than rain.' She pretended that she did not understand me, but, of course, she did.

CHAPTER V

THE SECOND DAY AT MOROTOC

THE next morning after breakfast, Charles and I left the stable for a ride over the plantation. He was mounted on a strong, serviceable gelding, better fitted for his daily, systematic task of supervision than for the hunting field; I on a high-bred, black Kentucky saddle-mare, which he kept for the use of his friends. He stopped first to take a glance at some work which his carpenter, Burwell Bassett, was doing on the gardener's house.

Burwell was an aged negro, with stooping shoulders and a sleek, bald head, fringed with wiry tufts of white wool. Before we began our ride, Charles confided to me the fact that he was a good, worthy man, but as slow as a tortoise or a snail at his work; so much so that he could never understand, he said, how the construction of the Cologne Cathedral could have

gone on for hundreds of years until the thought occurred to him that, perhaps, all the artisans engaged about it might have been like Burwell Bassett. To make things worse, Burwell, he declared, was swathed in such dense folds of self-complacency as to be entirely impervious to any dart of criticism or reproof.

'I asked him once,' said Charles, 'what kind of a person a certain man whom I was thinking of hiring was.' "He's jes' like me," replied Burwell. "He's a business man."'

Our interview with the old man merely brought out afresh the difficulty of dealing with him. Charles remarked that his job seemed to be making slow progress, and he replied with unruffled serenity: 'Marster, dis am a moughty pertickler job.'

From the gardener's house we took a road that led in a westerly direction to the road which ran from the back entrance to the mansion grounds, along the stone wall, to the iron

gates. When we reached the stone wall, we found Washington Staton, Charles' mason, employed in setting up a portion of it that had fallen down; for, whether because of the action of the frost, or of seismic tremors, or what not, a long, dry stone wall, erected over a varied surface of ground, requires frequent attention, even when constructed in the main of large flat pieces. Stone is not such a fugitive thing as the poppy's bloom or the snowflake on the river; but even it, solid and hard as it is, also has its way of reminding us that we live in a world of instability and disintegration.

'Washington,' said Charles, after taking a quick glance along the courses of iron-gray slabs that the former had built up, 'your wall is not perpendicular.'

'No, Marster,' replied Washington respectfully but firmly, with a self-satisfied smile, 'you'se mistaken. I'se an ole han' at 'rectin a wall, ez yer know.'

'I can't help it,' rejoined Charles, 'this wall is certainly out of plumb.'

'Marster, I understands de natur of rock,' Washington answered evasively, but with an altered air, which showed that his pride as a craftsman was beginning to be mortified.

'Well,' persisted Charles, 'you just come here where I am and see for yourself.'

Washington reluctantly complied with this suggestion, and, after casting a timorous glance along the face of his handiwork, said, as if every word that was being extracted from his mouth was a wisdom tooth with incurved roots:

'Well, I b'lieve, '*tis* a leetle slantindicular.'

From this point we continued along the stone wall to the iron gates, and from them we passed to the low-ground road. Here we turned to the right with the intention of following that road to the western boundary of the plantation. At a little distance on our right hand, as we did so, was the building

known as 'The Granary,' where the wheat grown on that part of the plantation was threshed and stored. The power, by which the threshing machine, that did the threshing, was operated, was supplied by a leather belt, which was connected with a huge, upright, wooden shaft sheltered by a shed at the back of the granary. This shaft worked upon a revolving pivot, and was set and kept in motion by horses and mules which were hitched up to it, and went around and around with it in its rotations.

A little to the west of 'The Granary,' was the building known as 'The Prize Barn,' where cured tobacco leaves, after being brought in from the firing barns, of which we shall presently speak, made up into neat bundles, were deposited in large light-staved hogsheads, and compacted with a powerful screw.

On the left hand, as we turned our faces to the west on the low-ground road, was 'The

Big Pasture,' one of the most picturesque and useful features of the plantation west of Turnip Creek. The surface of this pasture was, like that of the other river bottoms about it, level, and its soil was moist, and, except in spots, where the attrition of river freshets had left an occasional cicatrix, was very rich. Even during the most protracted drouths, when the hillsides to the north of it, which were used in part as a hog range, are as dry as a bone-heap, it is usually green and full of succulent sustenance for grazing animals. On the morning I am recalling, owing to the belated winter of that year, it was still full of cattle and sheep and brood mares and their colts, and presented a pastoral scene, not unlike some of those which impart such a charm to the landscapes of the Old World.

A little further up the road, we passed four slatted corn-houses, a sheep-shed, a hog-shed, a steer-house, where Durham beeves were fattened, a wagon-shed and a stable, in which the

horses and mules used in the farming operations on this part of the plantation were kept. These buildings were all of wood, but with one or two exceptions, they were erected on good, substantial brick or stone foundations. They were not so tasteful in point of design, or so elaborately and commodiously perfected as buildings of the same sort in colder regions of the country, but they were constructed of the very best timbers and were amply capacious for their needs; and, always kept scrupulously whitewashed, they were neat and attractive enough in appearance, with the stout post and rail and plank fences about them, to give an air of smug thrift and methodical good management to all their surroundings.

On the hill back of the steer-house, was a large brick house, with a prospect of the low-grounds as striking as that enjoyed by the mansion itself, in which the overseer of this part of the plantation resided; and, ranged in a row behind the overseer's home, were four

four-room log houses, on high stone foundations, which were occupied by farm laborers. This whole row of houses was named 'Union'; perhaps as a slight pledge of renewed loyalty to the political union that I had helped to preserve. On another steep hill to the east of 'Union,' above the hydraulic ram, and nearer the mansion, were two smaller houses, one of which was occupied by a farm laborer, and the other by the dairy woman whom I have mentioned. To the west of 'Union,' on two separate hills — for the topography of this part of Morotoc, back from the river, was very bold and rugged — were two other dwellings like those on 'The Back Hill'; one, the home of Anderson, the blacksmith, and the other the home of the tenant to whom Charles recommended such a long-handled hoe.

The thing that struck me most about all the dwellings outside of the stone wall was the bareness of the lives of their occupants, black and white. Unlike the inhabitants of urban

communities, they never felt the gnawing tooth of hunger. Except in tide-water regions, where shell, and other, fish are to be procured in abundance by a few hours' exertion, I do not know any country people less in want of the sheer necessaries of human subsistence. But the whole material side of life seemed, in the pinched economy of these dwellings, to be reduced to the very lowest terms of which it is capable, except in the tent of a nomad or the cabin of a trapper. The furniture was of the most rudimentary description. Beyond a picture clipped from some illustrated periodical, or a patch of crook-necked sunflowers or sickly marigolds or blue flags, there was nothing in or about them to indicate the presence of anything that could be called an æsthetic sense. The main concern of the householder was to seat himself as near as practicable to one of the pure, translucent springs of sweet freestone water which abound in that country. A pair of pigs, a rooster with a more

or less meager seraglio of hens, a vegetable garden scantily fertilized and not cultivated to the extent of one half its productive capacity, a bag of flour or white corn meal, and a pile of seasoned firewood, topped off with a supply of fat lightwood knots, furnished him with pretty much everything else that he appeared to deem necessary for his domestic comfort. To be sure, there are parts of the civilized world where the elements of mere animal contentment are not so abundant even as this.

Before passing on up the low-ground road beyond 'Union,' we made a diversion to the blacksmith shop, which was situated on a slope hard by it. Anderson was engaged in repairing a wagon tire, and, when we caught sight of him, he was blowing up his charcoal fire with the wheezing expirations of a great bellows which his strong arm was working to its utmost capacity. He would have been a good understudy for Hercules; for he was tall

and splendidly proportioned, and his muscles were more like chain links than human tissue. Nor was his brown face, despite some suggestions of sensuality, by any means a displeasing one. On the contrary, it was illuminated at times by distinct indications of robust horse-sense and kindly humor.

I had not been long at Morotoc before I learned from Charles that, though Anderson was never seen positively drunk, he took his daily potations of corn whiskey almost as regularly as he took his momentary inhalations of atmospheric oxygen. Indeed, one of Charles' recreations in his idle moments was to fix first, as well as he could, the date of Anderson's birth, then the probable date at which he began to drink whiskey, which Charles thought must have been when he was very young, then the number of gallons of liquor that he had consumed since that time each day and year, and finally to figure out a colossal total which left Anderson stranded

in the imagination, as it were, by a perfect tidal wave of ardent spirits. On the occasion of our visit, he was not so well.

'I'se got a mis'ry in my back, Cappen,' he said to me when Charles had introduced me to him by my title, and he had responded with a profound bow and a 'Sarvent, Marster.' 'I reckon 'tis de rheumatiz, but I dunno. Nuttin' seems to do me no good 'cep' a leetle whiskey, but I can't take much o' dat, bekase I ain't use to it, an' it goes right to my haid.'

'Why do you not drink a great deal of water?' I asked. 'Some doctors say that there is no remedy for rheumatism like water.'

It had never occurred to Anderson before that there could possibly be any connection between rheumatism and water, and he became so deeply interested in my suggestion that he entirely forgot the impression of sobriety that he had sought to create in my mind in his favor.

'Well,' he said, 'if de doctors rikommen'

sumfin' dat do'an cum outer dere own saddle-bags, an' dat dey do'an git nuttin' for, it must be a gran' med'cine sho. But what kind of water do you mean, Cappen? Rain-bar'l water, cistern water, or jes' spring water?'

'Just spring water,' I replied.

'Wid no brown sugar in it, Cappen?'

'Yes, with no sugar of any kind in it.'

'An' wid no liquor of any kind in it, Cappen — not a single drap?'

'Not a single drop.'

'Jes' *rank, plain, naked* spring water, Cappen?'

But by this time I was too convulsed with laughter to protract the colloquy, and Anderson himself ended it by saying:

'Spring water may suit de kind o' rheumatiz dat you an' Marster has, but I 'spec's 'twon't do mine no good.'

After bidding Anderson good-bye, Charles and I returned to the low-ground road, and kept on towards the western boundary of

Morotoc. A little beyond the steer-house, we came to two large, long barns, used for the storage of timothy hay grown on the low-grounds. Timothy did very well on these bottoms; though it did not flourish at all on the less moist uplands. Now, too, we began to see some of the hideous tobacco barns that do so much to mar the landscapes of South-side Virginia. They are sometimes frame, but are more frequently log, structures, and often the spaces between the logs, when they are of the log type, are chinked with only common red clay. They are usually roofed, too, with no better material than rough clapboards. Some of these tobacco barns on Charles' property were good frame structures, and all of them were a decided advance on the ruder types of such barns in Charlotte County. But all of them, likewise, were repulsive enough in aspect to justify an apt quotation by Charles in regard to them.

'When I die,' he said, 'I am afraid I shall

deserve the epitaph which was suggested as a proper one for Sir John Vanbrugh, who was, you will remember, a clumsy architect as well as a clever comedy writer:

> "Lie heavy on him, Earth! for he
> Laid many heavy loads on thee!"'

This reminds me of another observation that Charles once made to me about his death. He was, though too sensible a man to push any habit to excess, very fond of tobacco. He did not chew, a common failing at that day. On the contrary, he detested this habit to such an extent as frequently to declare that he would disinherit any son of his who practiced it; but he loved a cigar, and smoked one before he went out on the plantation in the morning, another before he returned to it after dinner, and still another after supper. And such happiness as he exhibited, when he was smoking, and philosophizing and jesting, I have never seen equaled in any smoker.

'I have just been reading a book of Oriental travel,' he remarked on one occasion. 'The writer says that in a certain part of China smoking is such a general vice that, when a man dies, his death is announced not by the statement, "Lee Wong has died," but by the statement, "Lee Wong has ceased to smoke." I find such intense pleasure in smoking that this is the way in which my own death should be proclaimed.'

One of his fancies was that tobacco was in the highest degree injurious to his health, and many were the shamefully violated promises which he made both to himself and the Mistress about desisting from its use; some even reduced to the form of solemn written covenants, signed and sealed. The Mistress finally came to regard these promises with no sensation stronger than that of good-natured tolerance; but not until she had been heard to say to Ellen that she had lived with him for many years, and that no more punctiliously

honorable man ever breathed until it came to tobacco, but that in his relations to it he was utterly unworthy of belief. Ellen told me that once, when more than usually possessed with the conviction that smoking was having a fatal effect upon his constitution, he walked, after breakfast, all the way to the river, and mournfully consigned a box of fragrant Havanas to its swift current; only to be observed after dinner at the store smoking a two-cent stogie — the best thing in the way of a good cigar that he could get short of Richmond or Lynchburg.

The tobacco barns on the plantation were used for the purpose of 'firing,' that is to say, of hastening by means of artificial heat the desiccation of the green tobacco plants raised on it.

A more tyrannical crop than the tobacco crop it would be hard to imagine. Sometimes a man is busy with this year's production before he has been able to market last year's.

In the early part of each season, the planter selects a spot on some sheltered, sunny slope in the heart of the forest, clears it off completely, and, after making a thoroughly mellow seed-bed, sows it with the minute seed of the tobacco plant. Commercial fertilizers, wood ashes, cheese-cloth covers, and, in dry spells of weather, liberal applications of water from the nearest brook, all play a part in fostering or protecting the vigor of the young plants that spring from this seed. Later, when the danger of frost has passed and the plants are a few inches high, they are taken up and transplanted in the fields which have been prepared for their reception. From this time on, until they have acquired their full growth, they must be tended as watchfully as a nursing child. The soil about their roots must be constantly stirred with plow and hoe, and be kept as clean as the palm of the human hand. To give their upper leaves compactness and body, they must be topped and suckered, and

freed from their lower leaves, which are called 'primings.' Above all, the leaves that are spared must be turned over and over again, one by one, with the hand, in the search for the destructive green worms, hatched out from eggs deposited on them by the tobacco moth, which would literally eat them up, if not destroyed.

In the latter part of August, or the early part of September, the stalk of each plant is slit downwards to a certain point with a knife, and the plant itself is placed with other plants, slit in the same way, in a straddling position, on a stout stick, riven from the trunk of the pine. The sticks are then gathered up with their burdens and wagoned off to a tobacco barn, where the supply of firewood necessary for the 'firing' process has long been heaped up, and become thoroughly seasoned. Here they are hung on cross-poles suspended at regular intervals, tier over tier, from one side of the barn to the other; and the plants on

them are thoroughly dried by fires kindled on the dirt floor of the barn, and kept going until the curing has been entirely accomplished. Later, from time to time, whenever the leaves of the plants are rendered sufficiently pliable for handling by the proper atmospheric conditions, they are stripped from the stalks, and tied up into small bundles, which are transported to market either in bulk or in hogsheads, such as those to which the screw in 'The Prize Barn' was applied.

The tobacco crop is a highly intensive crop in the amount of pecuniary return that it produces per acre, and it can be grown on very thin land with the aid of commercial fertilizers. Indeed, up to a certain point, the thinner the land is, the better adapted it is to the highly profitable species of the plant known as 'yellow tobacco,' which is cured with heat, equally diffused throughout a firing barn by means of flues, and is in great demand for cigarettes. The tobacco plant also rallies

quickly after one of the long periods of rainless summer weather that frequently recur in Southside Virginia.

In a word, no crop is so well adapted to a sparsely settled, primitive community, in a hot tobacco belt, where the art of soil upbuilding, based upon the conservation of animal manure and proper systems of rotation, is not practiced, or even understood, except imperfectly. Tobacco unquestionably suits remarkably well the special conditions in Southside Virginia, taking these conditions, including the habits and inveterate traditions of its people, as they actually are; but, as Charles repeatedly declared to me, the extent to which it engrosses the energy of the farmers in that part of Virginia exercises in many ways an extremely prejudicial effect upon their economic welfare. It puts them at the mercy of a single exacting crop; makes them indifferent to grass, *légumes*, and live stock — in other words, to some of the most vital re-

quirements of real soil fecundity; arrests the diversification of industry; consumes an enormous quantity of timber; and establishes on hill-slopes furrows which are almost certain to cause ruin in a land where even a single wheel-track is frequently converted by erosion into a yawning gully.

There are few more depressing spectacles than a yellow-tobacco lot, totally robbed of its natural fertility, and yet, under the stimulus of artificial manures, kept going a little longer, like a feeble heart reënforced by doses of digitalis. Such a condition was a profound affront to Charles' intelligent husbandry, and he took care that it should never exist on his property; nor for that matter any of the laxer practices of his neighbors in tobacco culture. He had as many horses, mules, hogs, and sheep on Morotoc as it would bear; he kept all his stables, barnyards, folds, and pens freely littered, winter and summer; and every spring and fall four-horse wagons, loaded

down with manure, were to be seen on their way to the upland fields, where he grew a great store of wheat (notwithstanding his saying that you could never be sure of your wheat crop in Southside Virginia until you had the biscuit between your teeth), as well as large quantities of oats and of tobacco — other than the yellow variety.

At the western end of the plantation, we came up with a considerable body of negro hands who were busily engaged in breaking off ears of corn from cornstalks in the low-grounds, and filling up the wagons, including a number drawn by powerful Durham steers, directed solely with the whip, which were conveying them to the open hillside back of the slatted corn-houses that I have mentioned. Here the contents of the wagons were heaped up in long piles, to be later husked at night by hand. This last operation was performed not only by the regular farm laborers but also by an additional force of negro women and of

superannuated men, no longer strong enough for the ordinary duties of a farm hand. By the common consent of both master and servant, the corn-shucking assumed something of the character of a *saturnalia*. A moderate amount of whiskey was distributed by the overseer among the men, and, under its influence, and that of the unwonted time and occasion, the huskers soon became keyed up to a pitch of coarse jollity which found vent, as the stripped ears flew thick and fast, in lugubrious melodies, infectious jests, and occasional flashes of license.

Of somewhat the same nature was the hog-killing which took place every year before Christmas, in the dead of the night, during some spell of freezing weather. On these occasions the fat hogs, which were to supply the plantation with fresh and salted pork, were run down in their pens, stuck to the heart with long knives, and hauled out, and cast, one by one, into a large vat full of water, elevated,

with the aid of round stones, heated in a roaring, open-air log-fire near by, to a scalding temperature. After being submerged for a moment or so, the carcass would be drawn out of the vat, divested of its hair, hung head downwards and eviscerated. Afterwards, in due season, it would be cut up into the various forms which are so well known to the American table, and its dissevered parts subjected to the further processes necessary to preserve them from decay and fit them for their several household uses. Abundant stocks of sausage and pure lard for the mansion were, of course, among the important sequels of the killing. The dancing torches by which the poor hogs were despatched, the dripping knives of the butchers, the bleeding and staggering forms of the victims, the contagious excitement kindled by the wholesale slaughter and the competition of activity and skill it involved, the negro women who gathered the next morning about the disembowelled carcasses to re-

ceive the perquisites allowed them from the humbler spoils of these occasions, and later the flock of buzzards, which hung about the spot and feasted on such derelict refuse as the human birds of prey, who had preceded them, chose to leave them, all served to give a rank, carnivorous flavor to these tragic episodes which nothing but the taste of a fresh spare-rib or of an old sugar-cured ham could dispel.

While I am on the subject of hogs, I recall the fact that Charles once told me that a neighbor of his was in the habit of cutting off all the tails of his pigs, on the theory that small as the tail of a pig is, it takes a twelfth of a barrel of corn a year to keep it going.

When I saw corn ears plucked from the stalk, my attention was called to the unfortunate practice, which prevails along the Staunton River, of not cutting the corn plant down, ear and all, at a season when the ear has been fully formed, but the stalks and its leaves are still full of nutriment. After the ears have

been pulled off, the stalks are actually allowed to stand until spring, when they are hacked down with sharpened hoes and burnt up in heaps just before the land on which they are grown is planted in corn again. In this way, tons of feed are allowed to run wholly to waste — feed that might be used to the very greatest advantage in the maintenance of cattle, which, besides being another source of income to the farmer in themselves, would help greatly to enrich his fields.

As for Charles, he made no use of the earless corn plants except to spread great quantities of their withered stalks as litter over the ground inside of his live-stock enclosures. He did not attempt to defend the practice. On the contrary, he bitterly bewailed it, and could see no excuse for it beyond the fact that corn shocks on the low-grounds would incur the risk of being floated off by a freshet that would not have reached the ears on standing corn, and the further fact that the season at which

corn should be cut down and shocked, is the very one at which the servitude of the planter to his tobacco is at its worst.

Next to the despoiled cornstalks, the thing that interested me most in the fields where the hands were at work was the elaborate system of open ditches by which these fields were drained. The trunk ditch, upon which the others were dependent, was so deep at its lower end, where it inclined off to the water-course, which finally received the drainage from the whole area, that no one but a powerful man, in the prime of human vigor, could toss a shovelful of wet sediment to the summit of one of its banks. On further acquaintance with the Morotoc low-grounds, I found that, from one end of them to the other, a distance of some five miles, to say nothing of the plantation low-grounds on the upper waters of Turnip Creek, they were fairly reticulated with a thoughtfully devised network of such ditches almost as complicated as the arterial

and venous channels through which the human blood circulates. One of them, which conducted its flow eastwardly through a long stretch of the river low-grounds into Turnip Creek, contained enough water to be a favorite haunt of the mallard and the dusky duck. They were all subject to inundation when the Staunton River was out of its banks, and were kept open only by periodical excavations.

When we came to the spot where the ears of corn were being harvested, Charles introduced me to the overseer in charge of the work. It was a saying of his that it was easier to secure a hundred good hands than one good overseer — so rare is the nice combination of firmness, justice, and kindness which constitutes the executive faculty. This particular overseer, I should say, possessed that faculty in a marked degree, unless his fearless, honest, kind countenance belied his real character. I talked with him long enough to learn that his

command and mine had confronted each other at Gettysburg.

'I have never been as peert since I was wounded thar,' he said simply.

Altogether he seemed to me to be an excellent representative of the less fortunate class of Virginia whites who were widely separated from the landed gentry of Virginia, in point of wealth and social position, and yet had too many self-respecting reservations of their own to feel at all abashed at meeting any one on a plane of common manhood.

Charles had no humorous story to tell of this overseer, but, before I left Morotoc, he did tell me one about his youngest son, Jack. He was, Charles said, such a shy boy that he rarely uttered a word to any one. When he grew older, he went off to the West to seek his fortune, and there he met a Southside Virginian who had occasion to pay a visit to Morotoc shortly afterwards, and was asked, while he was there, whether he had seen Jack.

'Yes,' he said, 'I sat at the same table with him t'other day.'

'Well,' inquired the questioner, 'did he talk any more than he used to do?'

'No,' was the answer, 'I never seed him open his mouf 'cep' to take in vittles.'

After we had turned away from the overseer, and had gone a short distance back towards the low-ground road, we met Pollydore, the negro head man on this part of Morotoc, who stood high in Charles' favor. Charles rarely ever met him without conversing at some length with him and bringing away from the conversation some quaint phrase or remark, to which he would revert more or less frequently for several days afterwards. On this occasion, he had a special reason for talking with Pollydore; for it was bruited about that a little preacher from New England was preaching (in the Baptist Church that Pollydore attended) the highly heretical doctrine that there is no such place as Hell.

In a sense, it was a relief to all the whites in the neighborhood to know that the mind of the preacher was addressing itself to such a comparatively harmless propaganda. The reflux of the Civil War had left behind it many political extremists and private adventurers who had done much to keep the new-born aspirations of the negroes in a state of ferment; and it had been followed by an influx of migrating carpet-baggers, as they were called. It had not been long since the cupidity of the negroes had been fired by the famous promise of an industrial reconstruction which was to make every freedman the happy possessor of 'forty acres and a mule,' and even as far north as Charlotte County it had cost the whites a desperate struggle to regain their former ascendancy. Consequently, there had been no little speculation as to the motives that had brought this missionary to such a secluded community, and the surmise was general that they were political. There was,

however, nothing to substantiate this suspicion beyond the fact that, while he ate and even slept with the negro portion of the population, he kept wholly aloof from the white. Indeed, if a white man ever got a glimpse of him, it was only in the casual or brief fashion in which he occasionally obtained the sight of a vanishing mink or fox.

It was gratifying, therefore, to Charles and to all the white people in the vicinity of Morotoc to find that the newcomer was apparently more interested in extinguishing firebrands in the next world than in kindling them in this. But to any white man who knew in what gross material colors the domestic pastors of the negroes were in the habit of painting the horrors of a purely physical seat of eternal punishment, where the damned were literally roasted, boiled, baked, and fried, heterodox talk of this kind could not but be a matter of considerable curiosity. Indeed, such is the force of habit and the luxury of gloating over

dread figments of the imagination that even the younger negroes were far from being disposed unconditionally to acquiesce in the novel proposition; and, as for the old negroes, they shook their heads dubiously, and contemplated not a little gloomily the demoralization that it was likely to work in the 'new issue' — that is to say, these younger negroes.

The result of it all was that Charles wished to find out at first hand from Pollydore himself what he thought of the situation.

'What do you think of this man?' he asked Pollydore, after introducing him to me, and duly leading him up to the topic.

'I do'an want to have nuttin' to do wid dat man,' answered Pollydore.

'And what do you think of his idea that there is no Hell?' further inquired Charles.

'All I got to say,' answered Pollydore still more moodily, 'is dat, if dere ain't no Hell, I do'an see no use of livin'.'

At the conclusion of our colloquy with Polly-

dore, we crossed the low-ground road, and plunged into a vast forest that ran back to a road known as the Booker's Ferry Road, which was the northern boundary of Morotoc. It was along this road that the great orator and statesman Patrick Henry passed on his way from his home at Red Hill to Charlotte Court House to exercise for the last time those transcendent powers of speech that inspired John Randolph of Roanoke, one of the most hypercritical of men, to say of him that he was Shakespeare and Garrick combined, and Silas Deane, the hard-headed New-Englander, who sat with Henry in the Continental Congress, to declare, in less lyrical, but, perhaps, even more significant language, that he was the 'completest speaker' he had ever heard.

Our course to this road lay along a clear, bold and, in one place, ledge-fretted brook, which, except for a short distance, after it reaches the low-grounds, never emerges from

the dense shade of deep, sunless woods. In these woods, I observed, among other trees, superb specimens of the pine, the red cedar, the hickory, the oak, and the tulip poplar. Here and there, my attention was called, too, to some of the tallest groups of the kalmia, or mountain laurel, that I had ever seen. It is the flowers of this shrub that often give bare peaks in some parts of the United States a snow-capped aspect, and caused Commodore Matthew Fontaine Maury, shortly before his death, to make his poetic exclamation:

> Take me through the Goshen Pass
> When the laurel is in bloom.

The track over which we went through this forest was a narrow, ill-defined woodland roadway used by the plantation wagons that were frequently penetrating its recesses in quest of firewood, and from this road numerous other woodland roads, still less distinctly worn down, radiated out into every direction

through the trees and underbrush. The forest itself was the most widespread on the plantation, extending as it did, though here and there along its southern edges indented by tobacco fields, from the mansion grounds to the western boundary of the property; a distance of some two miles, and from the low-ground road to the Booker's Ferry Road; a distance of some two miles also.

It was, however, by no means the only great forest on the plantation; for there were other far-reaching bodies of woods on it. Indeed, such immense areas of woodland were indispensable to the plantation, inasmuch as Morotoc not only required an enormous amount of house and barn fuel, but also thousands of feet of lumber and timber for the repair of buildings and the erection of post, rail and plank fences.

In the management of the Morotoc forests, if such a word as management can be used at all, practically no regard was paid to the

science of forestry. Trees in Southside Virginia were so abundant and prolific that much of the time of a planter was spent in grubbing up the seedlings that they sowed in the shortest time with amazing profusion over every arable field that was not kept in constant cultivation. The effect of forest depletion upon the welfare of himself or his children, therefore, was something that at the most gave him the sort of lukewarm concern only that the great English geologist, Sir Archibald Geikie, felt about the probable exhaustion of the world's coal supply. He had undergone some uneasiness of mind on the subject at one time, he said, but he had since satisfied himself that the world's supply of coal would last considerably longer than its supply of atmospheric oxygen.

Twice, while we were making our way to the Booker's Ferry Road, a pheasant rose up in front of us; and once we dispersed a flock of affrighted wild turkeys.

Finally, we arrived at the Booker's Ferry Road, near a clearing on the plantation, known as Waterloo, which had furnished a central place of rendezvous and a drilling-ground for the members of the military company that Charles, on the eve of the Civil War, had organized in Charlotte County at his own personal expense.

We had now left behind us the part of the plantation which was overseen by my Gettysburg *vis-à-vis*, and had entered upon a minor portion of it, known as Brookland, because of the many brooks that threaded their way across its face towards Turnip Creek, that was under the superintendence of another overseer. Passing eastwardly for about a mile down the Booker's Ferry Road, we turned into Brookland again at a point on a high elevation which afforded us a protracted and quite picturesque view of the valley of Turnip Creek, and of objects several miles away on hills on the plantation which looked

directly down upon the valley of the Staunton. With the exception of a few flats along the creek, which yielded a small amount of corn, Brookland was merely a series of confused hills given over to the cultivation of tobacco, and supplied with the farm buildings, including a large number of the squalid tobacco barns, and dwellings, including a neat overseer's house, essential to the operations of a separate and distinct farm organization.

After a bird's-eye view of the different fields on Brookland, we returned to the Booker's Ferry Road, crossed Turnip Creek, and trotted on in an easterly direction along the northern boundary of Morotoc until we came to a private road which struck off from the former road, and led down to the center of the greater half of the plantation; which lay east of Turnip Creek. On our way to this point, we passed what had once been the site of an old-time tavern which drew out an interesting narrative from Charles, that I after-

wards induced him to commit to writing in the following words. The written narrative is, of course, decidedly more academic in form than his oral words; though in substance the same.

'About a year ago, as I approached the store at Aspenwall, a hamlet just beyond the confines of Morotoc, on the Booker's Ferry Road, in Charlotte County, Virginia, I observed a buggy with a pair of horses attached to it standing by the front porch of the building. Upon entering the store, I found a group of men about the fireplace in the rear of the premises, basking in the warmth of a hickory-log fire. All of them were neighbors of mine, except a single individual whose appearance, conspicuously contrasted as it was with that of the other persons in the room, at once arrested my attention. He was a tall, portly man with a countenance as well as figure that reflected generous

living and cosmopolitan associations. His head was covered with a high silk hat, and his limbs were clad in garments of the most fashionable cut. There was no evidence of mere vulgar dissipation about him, but his showy cravat, the diamond in his shirt-front, and the massy rings on his fingers marked him out unmistakably as a man familiar with the shady side of city life. As I drew near the fire, he was beginning the recital of his day's experiences, and after I had bowed to him, shaken hands with the rest, and taken a seat, which one of them pressed upon me, he politely commenced afresh.

"'I was born," he said, "about seventy years ago, near Turnip Creek, on the upper end of the present Morotoc plantation, at a place called Wilson's Tavern. This tavern was at that time, and for many years afterwards, a well-known one. The numerous wayfarers, who used the

Booker's Ferry Road, before the construction of the Richmond & Danville Railroad, stopped at it for refreshment or lodging, and it offered them all the rude conveniences and recreations of such a tavern in that part of the world at that time. There was, of course, liquor on the premises, and cards, dice, and other diversions of that sort were not unknown to them; though entirely too heinous to be openly practiced in a Presbyterian community like this.

'"As soon as I grew old enough to assist in the entertainment of the guests of the house, my services were fully enlisted for that purpose, and it was not long before I was engaged in occupations which ranged all the way from the care of the tavern stable to filling a vacancy at a card table. In this manner, I became familiar with the whole round of social relaxations peculiar to such resorts the world over,

but, as time wore on, I chafed more and more under the restrictions that tied me down to a spot so far removed from the crowded haunts of men, with which I had become acquainted through the descriptions of travelers; so one day I slipped off from the tavern with a wild young fellow from Charleston, who had persuaded me to try my fortune in town, and finally, after many vicissitudes, I became a resident of New York. There I have lived ever since, and have prospered to a greater extent than I ever anticipated even in my most hopeful moments."

'As the man uttered these words, with a slight pause, as it seemed to me, at the word "prospered," my eye wandered mechanically to the solitaire diamond in his shirt front.

'"For many years," he continued, "my memory dwelt fondly upon the incidents of my birth and youth, and, at last, I felt

that I could not die in peace until I had seen them once more. Accordingly, I came down to Drake's Branch on the Richmond & Danville Railroad this morning, and hired the buggy now in front of this building, and started off for the site of the old tavern. After passing Aspenwall, there was scarcely an object along the road that did not receive from me an attention almost morbid. I noticed how the road in places had been shifted from one bed to another, as a former bed became too deep for use, until it appeared to me that its course had in some respects been essentially altered. The giant oak, which formerly stood at the point, where a branch road leads off from the road, that I was following, to what I am told is now a part of the Cabell plantation, was showing signs of decay, but the boundary oak which stood a short space from the tavern still towered aloft as green as

ever above the surrounding trees. Here and there what I had known as open fields were now clothed with pines, not so thick however as not to reveal vestiges of ancient corn rows, and, on the other hand, patches of what was forest in my time had been cleaned up and exposed to the sun. Everything had very much the same face it had when I had passed up the road, which I was retracing after the lapse of a half-century, on my way to the outside world. You can imagine my feelings as I approached the spot from which I had been separated by so many years. I expected to find at least some dilapidated building or lonely chimney to recall what I had known so well.

'"But when I turned from the public road, on which I had not met a solitary human being after I left Aspenwall, and had issued from the dense thickets, which flanked the mere trail of a byroad that I

had taken, nothing but vacancy, where so much life had once been, met my eye. The tavern was gone. Not even a brick remained where it had stood. The out-buildings, too, were all gone. Not a single object was left to help me to reconstruct the past except the nearly filled pit where the ice-house had formerly stood. All the life of that spot seemed to have ended, as each one of us ends, in a hole in the ground. Not a man or a woman or a child was anywhere to be seen. In a bit of soft bare earth, near the ice-house, I noted the imprint of a wild turkey's foot. Not a sound was to be heard except the notes of a wood robin, and the clatter of a log-cock upon a belted oak which had sickened and died but still contrived to hold up its naked head. I sat down upon a fallen log, and, as the flood of recollections, prompted by the spot, surged through my mind, I felt as if death had doomed

that spot not so much to ruin as to obliteration.

"'There was but one more object that I cared to look up, and that was the race-track that formerly existed near Turnip Creek, and upon which I had won so many triumphs as a jockey. Rising, I made my way through the underbrush to where it once was. A few sunken traces were all that I could find of it in the copses and brambles that had overgrown it. I brushed away the leaves from the earth in several places to get a better look at them. A few footsteps more, and I found myself by the side of Turnip Creek, the stream upon which my thoughts had so often been borne since I absconded from the tavern on that bright morning in my boyhood. There it was, the one thing unchanged (or, rather, the one thing that seemed to be unchanged) in that all but blotted out scene of my youth — its waters

still gliding by the willows that fringed its banks, and still gently upbraiding the shoals and drift that impeded its course.

'"As my gaze rested upon them journeying so cool and undefiled, from their forest fountains to the Staunton River, my softened heart became like water too. I got down on my knees close beside them — think of it! I, who have lived in Godless New York for nearly half a century! — and, gentlemen, I am not ashamed to confess it, I kissed them as they flowed by my lips."

'I afterwards learned more about this stranger, and I am now prepared to claim Charlotte County not only as the home of Patrick Henry and John Randolph of Roanoke, but as the birthplace of a man who might have been an orator, too, but contented himself with conducting one of the most famous gambling establishments that New York has ever known.'

The main staple of the story told by the old gambler was doubtless what Charles remembered it to be; but not a little of its imagery and coloring, I suspect, could be safely referred to the glow of his own quick, dramatic, and rhetorical instincts.

The part of Morotoc, which lay east of Turnip Creek, was, in an agricultural sense, decidedly the best part of the plantation. On it, to begin with, was the wide and fertile alluvial plain seen from the mansion. Unlike the part of Morotoc, which lay west of Turnip Creek, it also contained a large body of level uplands easily fertilized and with equal ease kept so. In addition to a great number of the ubiquitous tobacco barns, it was likewise improved by many farm buildings and dwellings. Some of the former possessed as many as four rooms, and were solid brick structures that lacked only a few external embellishments and a neat curtilage to make them really attractive homes. One of the latter was a huge

prize barn like the one on the western part of Morotoc, and two of the remainder were spacious brick granaries used for threshing and storing the wheat which this part of Morotoc yielded in greater abundance than the rest of the estate. Moreover, both the mill where the logs felled in the Morotoc forests were sawed and the corn grist set apart for its own domestic wants was ground, and the store where the lively Irish-American cracked his jokes, were east of the Creek.

The mill was operated by a huge overshot wheel, moved by the water of two considerable mill ponds, which, after being conducted for about a mile from them by a winding canal, hurried down upon it through a long mill-race. The mill ponds teemed with mullet, a soft fish even more insipid than 'the sorrel horse,' which Ellen had extolled so highly, and also abounded in silver perch, a true perch, in form like the ordinary white perch, but differing from it in color as tarnished

silver differs from silver that has just been brightly polished.

The prospects on this part of Morotoc were not so ingratiating as those on the other side of the Creek; but it had at least two unusually interesting features. One was a beautiful, open grove of princely oaks, situated on a plateau just above the low-grounds, which seemed to have been marked out by nature itself as a site for a handsome residence, and the other was two rows of trees which flanked a road that stretched all the way across the low-grounds from the foothills of this part of Morotoc to the river, and almost converted it into a dim, solemn cathedral aisle, with the pillared walls and fretted roof formed by their trunks and interlocking branches.

CHAPTER VI

THE CLOSE OF MY SECOND DAY AT MOROTOC

THE hour was too late to allow us to look up the overseer and working force on this part of the estate, so, after scanning its general aspects, as we had done those at Brookland, we went back to the mansion by way of the low-ground road.

When we reached the wood-house, Charles left me to speak to one of the servants on the colonnade, and I went around to the front porch. As I entered the front door of the mansion, Ellen was at the piano in the middle drawing-room, and, above the sound of her clear, musical voice, I could distinguish these words, which had doubtless been kindled in her heart, or in the heart of some one else, by the passionate love for Virginia, inspired by the exalted feelings of the Civil War:

When my lover says he loves me,
What forsooth am I to say?
That his pleading strangely moves me,
Murmur, struggle as I may?

Or shall I no more endeavor
From his fond pursuit to fly?
Tell him I have loved him ever,
And will love him till I die?

No! I'll tell him of a mistress,
Fair and noble, proud of mien,
Even in hours of dread distress,
Dauntless as her Virgin Queen.

Oh! Let him win with his good sword,
One sweet look from her bright eye,
And I will greet him as my lord,
And will love him till I die.

As Ellen, wholly unconscious of my proximity, concluded her song, she was startled by finding that I was standing at her side.

'I fear,' I said dejectedly, 'that you are a wholly unreconstructed Virginian.'

'I am not so entirely certain of that,' she replied reassuringly. 'Sally has no country besides Virginia, except, perhaps, England, but Charles and I are Americans as well as Virginians.'

After dinner she went up to her room, but shortly afterwards returned, attired for rough walking.

'If you are going again to see Hannah's sick child, I hope you will allow me to accompany you,' I said.

'I am not,' she answered. 'You will be glad, I am sure' — this with an arch glance — 'to hear that the child is much better. I am called out of doors, however, by something even more depressing than sickness, and that is the funeral at the plantation graveyard of one of Charles' faithful hands. I hardly imagine that you care to be present on such an occasion, but, if you do, I shall be glad to have you go with me.'

I insisted that I was not unduly depressed by funerals, and proceeded with her to the

graveyard, which was situated within sight of the mansion, on a bluff that rose above the west bank of Turnip Creek. When we reached the place, the grave had already been dug by two ditchers assigned by Charles for the purpose; and assembled about it was a numerous concourse of negro mourners. On such occasions, not only was the grave dug, and the coffin made by laborers in Charles' employment, but a respite from toil was given to every one on the plantation who desired to attend the burial.

Shortly after our arrival, a wagon, followed by the family of the decedent, brought the coffin and its tenant to the spot, and, in a few moments more, an aged negro, whose blanched head only too truly certified to his right to pass authoritatively upon the value of human existence, walked a step or so in advance of the gathering about the grave, and gave utterance to something like the following thoughts:

'Brederen an' Sisters! De day befo' yistiddy, I went to de house of dis man, havin' heard dat he was sick nigh unto death, an' I met Sister Judy, his wife, at de do'. "Sister Judy," sez I, "how is Jeremiah?" "He done gone home," sez she. An' sho 'nuff when I crep' to de bed, an' drawed de kivver from his face, I saw dat winter's cold an' summer's heat were all de same to him. He done gone home. If de Profit Isaiah had spoke dem words he could not hev spoke dem mo' to de p'int.

'If we only knowed it, dis earf dat wars sich a peaceful, invitin' look dis evenin' is not our home. De Gret God moulds us outer de miry clay, an' breaves jes' a leetle of His bref into us, an' den, lo! He tuns His back upon us for a moment, an' de bref dies out, an' de clay cracks an' crumbles an' mixes wid de groun' agen. Dis life is so short dat I sometimes studies how 'tis dat de Allwise has succeeded in makin'

us so keen arter it. Dis man often spoke of his home, an' a moughty good home he tried to make it for Judy and de chilluns dat he raized by her (dat's God's livin' troof!) but what right had he, I ax you, to call it home at all? I rikollek de very day dat he was born. It was de year dat brick granary was built across de Creek. He cum from de outer darkness jes' as naked ez de palm of my han', an' so helpless dat his mammy had to even holp him to lif' his mouf to her breast. A few years mo', an' he was strong enuff to split a leetle firewood an' to fetch a leetle water from de spring; a few years mo', an' he was a man swingin' his cradle an' handlin' his axe ez proud ez if he thought hisse'f ez strong ez de lean arm wid which Death swings *his* cradle. A few years mo' — time so brief dat de Almighty hardly tun His head to notice it — an' dat home is blotted out de same ez dose low-grounds

is when de moon done gone down, an' all de stars is buried deep in de clouds.

'No, Brederen an' Sisters, I done live longer dan any of you, an' I has allus had a roof above my haid, but even I ain't nuvver had no home here. De Giver of all good has given us a life longer dan de life of dat jimson flower dere by dat grave, or of dem gnats dat's bobbin' up an' down in dis sunshine — p'r'aps longer dan de life of dem frogs dat's croakin' in dem ditches (dough leetle is knowed, I reckon, about de life of a frog, under water as he is mos' of his time, an' 'sposed to de appetites of snakes an' blue cranes); but even dat black crow dat is cawin' hisse'f hoarse in dem pines yonder, an' dat for all I knows was stealin' corn on dese plantations mo' an one hundred years ago, kin beat us all when it comes to livin' right along. Sartain 'tis dat he mought jes' as well call de limb dat he is perched

on his home ez for me to say dat I got any. Take away de time dat we is pulin' infants an' de time dat we is ole and wuffless, an' our lives is almost ez short as de flight of a barn-swallow from de hills of Halifax to de hills of Charlotte.

'What better proof kin dere be of how perishable we is dan dis very graveyard itself? Dere is a grave over dere under dat cedar, dat done strike its roots down into it an' suck de marrow from de bones in it. In cose, de oldest man on dese plantations do'an know whose bones dey are dat been 'bused dat way. But dere is dat oder grave nigher to us dat ain't had time to grow no tree, an' has sceercely had time enuff to become kivvered over wid cow itch vines. Kin any of you even tell me whedder 'tis a man or a woman dat fills it? As for the names of mos' of de people dat's lyin' 'bout here, I mought as well ax you de name of dat jealous

crow dat is still cawin' hisse'f hoarse as he eyes dese proceedin's. A few years mo', an' dis very grave dat we have dug dis day will be lost to de knowledge of everybody 'cep' some hunter dat may ketch his foot on it when he is trackin' old hyars in dese thickets.

'No, Brederen and Sisters, Sister Judy was right. Our home is not here, but up yonder beyant dem white clouds dat's hangin' over us lookin' like big open cotton bolls tunned upside down. Dar's whar we come from; dar's whar we gwine to. From birth to death, we are in de han's of de moughty power dat direks de land an' de water, an' eben dem stars dat move 'bout in de sky mo' reg'lar dan railroad trains, ez if dey was all nuffin' but a plowshar slippin' through de soft soil of dese uplands. We abide here but a while in dese earthly cabins only dat He may see how fitted we is for dat real home of

ours dat He has prepar'd for us etarnal in de hebbens. 'Tis His law dat de bread we eat must be soaked in de sweat of our own faces, an' at times He blights our craps, an' visits us with mis'ry in our backs an' limbs, an' sooner or later ev'ry human soul rises up into de skies followed by de sobbin' voice of onconsolable sorrow or sinks down to de debbil, loaded wid cusses; but even here His countenance is oftener tunned towards us dan away from us, an', mo'over, all de time we knows dat up yonder wings an' harps an' white robes an' freedom from sin an' suff'rin' an' rest an' de life everlastin', right by de steps of de gret throne of our Hebbenly Father, is awaitin' us; if we'se only righteous till de eend. Dar Jeremiah is already. His grave close done drap from him. His eyes done open, an' his limbs done become supple agen, an' he kin eat, sleep, sing, rock hisse'f in his

rockin' cheer, or projec' wid de oder angels from mornin' till night widout ever so much as even havin' to trouble hisse'f whedder de sun is risin' or settin'.

'Wipe dem tears den from your eyes, Sister Judy, an' tell dem bereaved chilluns of yourn dat's hangin' onto your skirts to dry deres too. A few years mo', an' oder waggin's will be bringin' oder coffins to dis place, an' den all of you will be united wonst agen, nuvver to be parted mo'. In de meantime, let all dem dat hears my voice take counsel. Go 'bout your daily wuk cheerfully, manfully, wrestlin' wid all de evil suggestions of your rebellious hearts, determined while you are here to do your duty faithfully to God an' man, an' makin' de mos' of all de innocent pleasure dis world affords, but rikollekin' allus dat wide as dis world is 'tain't wide enuff to make a home.'

At this point, the words of the preacher

died away only to be succeeded by a wild, passionate outbreak of emotion from his more impressionable auditors, which never ceased until another rude mound had been heaped up; soon to become in its turn a new trellis for the wandering vines that had involved so many of its predecessors in their network.

After the grave had been filled, I suggested to Ellen that we should cross over the low-grounds to the river-bank, and walk upstream along it to a point opposite the iron gates; and from this point recross the low-grounds and return to the mansion. She assented, and, on reaching the river, we fell into a path on the crest of a dyke, parallel with it, which had been thrown up as a part of an elaborate system of earthworks, that had been created for the purpose of preventing the overflow of the low-grounds during floods, but had been breached in so many places by their irresistible pressure as to be quite useless for that purpose. Naturally enough, after the funeral,

our conversation first turned to the different servants employed by Charles in and about the mansion, and Ellen had more than one humorous story to tell me about Lazarus, Hannah, and other negroes whose acquaintance the reader has already made.

'But how about Jonathan Staton, your butler?' I asked. The tall, well-knit figure, grave face and formal manner of this man had early attracted my attention, and I was curious to know something about him.

'Oh!' replied Ellen, 'do you wish to hear all about him? He is a very worthy man and almost as much a member of the family as Charles and Sally themselves. He lives in one of the houses on "The Back Hill," and every morning and afternoon, winter and summer, he stops at "The House Spring," on his way to his work at the mansion, fills a large wooden bucket with fresh drinking-water for the family, and climbs up the hill back of the ice-house to the grounds. So far as I know, only

two interesting episodes have ever marked his monotonous life. One was a short visit to Danville, where a daughter of his had married, and settled down, after reporting back to Morotoc that Danville was a most delightful place of residence because a person could stand at one end of Main Street in that town, and look down it, and see nothing but colored people. The other was his second courtship after he became a widower. The trip to Danville was brought about by Charles' importunity, excited by his compassion for the dreary sameness of Jonathan's daily life. The courtship, though prosecuted with a great deal of ardor, did not prosper; perhaps because Jonathan was too old; perhaps because, grave as he looks, he had a facetious turn of mind which may have betrayed him at some crisis of the affair into a fit of untimely levity.

'I can tell you an amusing story, too, about Jonathan,' continued Ellen. 'He has but a single failing. When Christmas is coming on,

he finds it hard to resist the temptations which beset that period of the year. For several Christmases before the incident to which I am about to refer, his deflections from propriety had not been serious enough to merit anything more than a passing word from Charles. Indeed, but for a certain excessive solemnity of demeanor, accompanied by suspicious vibrations of his waiter as he handed around supper, one could scarcely, on these occasions, have distrusted his condition at all. But this was not true of the Christmas week which succeeded the end of his courtship. One night, during that week, he was so plainly under the weather that Charles followed him into the pantry after supper, and took him soundly to task.

"'Jonathan," he said sternly, "you are drunk."

"'No, Marster, you can't 'cuse me of dat," replied Jonathan. "I ain't drunk. I'se only been keepin' Christmas a leetle."

'"Well, you have been keeping it enough to be drunk," replied Charles in the same stern tones as before.

'"No, Marster, you can't 'cuse me of dat," repeated Jonathan, who realized that his case was such a bad one that he could not afford to surrender his distinction. "I'se jes' a leetle flustrated."

'"And what possible excuse can you have for allowing yourself to get into such a condition?" asked Charles.

'"Bekase," answered Jonathan a little defiantly, "If I didn't have no Christmas, I mought jes' as well be in de buryin'-groun'. Wuk, wuk, from one eend of de year to de oder, 'tain't nuttin' 'cep' wuk. I had more freedom in de ole days befo' de wah dan I has now. You won't give me no chance to visit my daughter in de city, an' I couldn't marry dat gal I'se been cotin' bekase you wouldn't 'low me 'nuff time to do my cotin' in."

'The gross injustice of these accusations

was too much for Charles, and he put an end to the conversation by ordering Jonathan to leave the house, and not to return any more. That night, Sally says, was one of the most restless that she ever knew Charles to pass. After Jonathan's departure from the house, Charles' indignation soon died down, and his one thought was that he had dismissed from his service the loyal servant and friend whose existence had been linked with that of his family for so many years. He could scarcely sleep at all for the stings of self-reproach, and the next morning, long before his usual time for rising, he arose, dressed himself, and went to the back part of the house. Jonathan, of course, was in the pantry, making the usual preparations for breakfast. Then followed this conversation, which I have heard told by Charles so often that I know it by heart.

"'Good morning, Jonathan," said Charles.

"'Good mornin', Marster," said Jonathan.

"'Jonathan," said Charles deprecatingly,

"I fear that I spoke to you somewhat more harshly last night than I intended; I did not mean to say to you just what you probably thought I did mean. You have been connected with my family for many years, Jonathan."

'"Dat's so," said Jonathan.

'"And, Jonathan, during all that time, except for this weakness of yours, when Christmas is coming on, no family could have had a more faithful servant and friend than mine has had in you."

'"Dat's so," said Jonathan.

'"And I think I can further say that I have tried to be what I should have been to you."

"Dat's so," said Jonathan, with a cordial emphasis that left nothing to be desired.

'"And what I meant last night was not that I wanted you to leave this plantation, but that I wanted you simply not to come into this house again. I intended that you should re-

main free of rent in the house in which you were born and have lived for such a long time, and be entitled to your rations and firewood, and to your garden plot, and to your corn ground, and to everything else just as in the past. You were merely not to come here any more. I hope, Jonathan, you did not think I was resolved to discharge you in the sense of sending you away from this plantation."

'"No, Marster," replied Jonathan, with a happy expression of countenance in which there was not a solitary trace of resentment. "I warn't afeard of dat, bekase I knowed dat, even if you wanted to discharge me, Mistis wouldn't let you."'

As we walked up the river-bank, after the story about Jonathan had been told, I availed myself of the first opportunity to ask Ellen something about her own life.

'Do you not feel at times as if you would like to go off to some kind of Danville yourself?' I inquired. 'Lovely as Morotoc is, a

young woman must occasionally find it rather a lonely spot.'

'Oh! not at all,' she answered gayly. 'To begin with, there are many ways in which I make myself helpful to Charles and Sally. I act as a kind of secretary to him, and I assist her in the care of the house and grounds, which she oversees very closely. Beside the ordinary routine of household management, there are many little domestic arts at a remote place like this that require vigilant direction. Then there is the greenhouse to be watched throughout the winter, and the grounds and flower garden to be superintended during the growing months. Frequently in summer I am up long before breakfast, and at work in the flower garden — weeding, clipping, and transplanting with my own hands.'

'Is there not something that you could do there in the morning, before breakfast, with my help, even at this time of the year?' I asked.

She laughed, but made no further reply.

'Then,' she continued, 'we have a good library, as you know, and I am fond of reading.'

'But, after all,' I said, 'agreeable and instructive as reading is, it cannot wholly take the place of social enjoyments.'

'Nor does it with us,' she answered. 'Every now and then, we give a dinner-party at which Charles and the champagne, which he so much resembles, put everybody in a good humor to enjoy the courses that Sally and myself have devised. Moreover, during the shooting season, we frequently have house-parties which collect numerous friends and relations of ours, old and young, under our roof; and then there are such yelpings of dogs, and clatter of horses, and such strings of partridges, rabbits, and wild fowl hanging from the eaves of the colonnade in front of the kitchen, and such keen feasting after the day's hunt, and such banter and laughter, and such flirtation

along "The Lover's Walk," and on the sofas in the middle drawing-room and the library, as you can scarcely conceive of under the quiet conditions which prevail at Morotoc just now.'

The very memory of it all evidently filled her with a sense of exhilaration; for her eyes glistened, and her voice ran out into joyous accents as she recalled the past.

'Nor should I forget,' she went on, 'the neighborhood parties to which I am invited in summer. We go to them over our rough roads, and through our deep, silent woods, after dark, and we dance at them all night, and, indeed, until the sun comes streaming in through the window panes the next morning. And then we go home, tired and heavy-eyed — but oh! so delectably happy.'

'And does your desire for social diversion ever take you beyond the limits of Charlotte County?' I inquired.

'Indeed, it does,' she replied promptly. 'In

the dead of winter, when the days begin to hang heavily on our hands, we go down to Richmond for a month or six weeks. There is never any lack of social stir there; and sometimes we spend a week in New York before we return to Morotoc — shopping, sight-seeing, and incessantly on the stretch to preserve our provincial lives from destruction by the perils of its highways. And, best of all, every summer Charles has the great family carriage hitched up, and takes us over to the White Sulphur Springs, where, after our jolts on the mountain roads, and our hardships at wayside taverns, I find myself in a true woman's elysium.'

Talking in this fashion, as we went along, we arrived a few minutes later at the mansion.

That night, after supper, we were all sitting, as on previous nights, in the library. The two boys were turning over the pages of a large book, which pictured in a rather crude but decidedly interesting way the White Sulphur

Springs, Old Point Comfort, and many other places of interest in Virginia.

'Captain Endicott,' said David, with an expression in which mischief was decidedly predominant, 'Aunt Ellen writes stories too.'

Ellen blushed violently, stamped her foot impatiently, and quickly exclaimed:

'You wicked, wicked little scamp! Why should you tell tales like that?'

But David was slow, as we have seen, to relinquish a point when he had once made it. So there was nothing for Ellen to do except to look up the story and to read it; which she did with so much spirit and in such exquisitely modulated tones that I almost felt as if she were at the piano again, singing the song that I had heard earlier in the day.

The title of the story was 'Old Mat,' and Charles, of course, was one of the leading figures in it. It was in these words:

> '"Dar now! You done drap yo'se'f right down in my vittles."

'These words reached the ear of the Master just as he rounded the chimney of old Mat's cabin, and reined up his horse in front of its door.

'The speaker was an aged negro who sat all alone in the doorway, with a tin plate beside him, well garnished with fried bacon and cabbage, to which he had evidently been addressing himself with hearty vigor. As soon as he realized the presence of the Master, he rose from his seat, with a countenance in which affection and respect were curiously blended, and made a profound obeisance, accompanied by the habitual:

'"'Sarvent, Marster."

'As he did so, he presented a figure that might well have won something more than a casual glance from a kindly eye. He was very old. The oldest oak with a naked top, that stood on that June day near the cabin, did not seem so ancient.

His hair had been blanched by the snows of many winters, until it resembled the dull white of a sheep's fleece, and his once erect form was sadly bent; but in his tall, massive frame there were still remains of the physical power which had once made him the most famous of all the bateau-men who wrestled with the strenuous current of the Staunton River.

"'To whom were you talking, Mat?" asked the Master.

"'To one of dese hants, one of dese sperrits," replied Mat, without a trace of excitement or self-consciousness, and as naturally as a Chincoteague fisherman might refer to a mosquito. "Dey gives me a time of it, I tell yer," he continued. "Sometimes I falls asleep, an' smack! one of dem slaps me plumb in de face, an' wakes me up, an' sometimes one of dem tuns up my dipper jes' ez I'se heistin' it to my mouf, an' now dis last impudent ras-

cal he jes' done his bes' to spile my vittles."

'A shade of compassion flitted over the Master's face, but Mat did not notice it.

'"Dey'se mo' malicious," he went on, "dan a black gnat. 'Pears like dey knows how good you is to me, an' thinks dat you ought ter have given dis house an' dese rations to dem instead of me. But, dough some folks is skeered of dem, I ain't skeered of dem," and here there was a careless, rising inflection of scorn in the old man's voice. "I makes for dem every time dey gives me a chance, an' sometimes I beats dem an' I thrashes dem till I pants like a steer in de dog days. De villain! Even befo' I knowed my Marster was comin' — an' ole ez I is, my ear is still putty peert to know dat — he knowed it, an' off he went ez swif' ez a pigeon hawk, but he still roun' here I reckon —

up dere under dem shingles or down dere under dem jice."

'As he uttered these words, Mat turned a little in his seat, and first cast his eye upwards as if he were following the ascent of a bird, and then downwards as if he were following the descent of a rat.

'"Your eyes, Mat," replied the Master, "are not quite so good as they were when, all alone, you rolled that hogshead of tobacco down the ferry slope, and placed it, I never could tell how, in the bottom of a bateau. You are mistaken" — the Master found difficulty in selecting an expression soft enough to suit the case — "in supposing that there are such things as hants and spirits. The good people that leave this world," he added, falling into the quaint vein of observation that so often lent freshness to his words, "would not come back if they could, and the bad

people that leave this world could not come back if they would. I have been living upon these plantations for many years, and in all that time I have never seen a hant or a spirit."

'Old Mat received the reference to the hogshead with a smile of momentary self-satisfaction, but it passed quickly from his face as he responded with just a little warmth:

'"In cose," he said, "you nuvver see no hants nor sperrits. Dey knows dat you is de boss of dese plantations, sperrits an' all, an' dat, if dey is not moughty keerful 'bout showin' desselves, de fust thing dey knows you will be puttin' dem too to wuk. Dere is some oder pussons dan hants on dese plantations dat you would nuvver see either if only dey could make desselves sceerce when dey please."

'And as these last words escaped the old man's lips, the emphasis with which he

had commenced his reply died away in a low chuckle in which the Master could not forbear to join.

'It was plainly useless to try to dispel, by reasoning, the shadows that growing senility were casting over the old fellow's mind; so the Master fell into Mat's humor, and gave free rein to the impulses of his own curiosity.

'"What sort of things are these hants — these spirits?" he asked.

'"Dey'se white, in cose," replied Mat, "dat is, white like po' white folks. Dey shift 'bout too fast for me to say whedder it is fur or whedder it is fedders dat dey has on dere backs, but I knows dat dey got wings dat open an' shet jes' de same ez de wings of a turkey buzzard when he tryin' to skeer away de ole sheep from her lamb. I ain't nuvver hear any of dem say anything in pertickler, but dey is always a-chatterin'. One mornin', a jay

bird come down near my do' an', when he heard dem carryin' on so, he sorter tuck his tail under his body, an' nuvver stop flyin' till he rech'd de top of de highest of dem oaks. You knows it must be putty tall talk when a jay bird 'fected like dat. I wish I could p'int 'em out mo' 'zactly, but 'tain't so easy. Dey ain't beasts an' dey ain't birds. Dey jes' simply hants — sperrits."

'"And do you think there is any way in which I can stop these things from pestering you?" asked the Master.

'"Oh, yes!" said Mat reflectively, his face lighting up with a happy look as he spoke. "If you will only get off of dat hoss an' come in dis house, an' deliver a noration to dese varmints, tellin' dem dat you is out of all patience wid dem for treatin' me so, an' dat you ain't gwine to stand it no mo', an' dat, if dey don't clar out fer good, you will bresh dem till dey

sick, I think dat I will be able to eat my vittles in peace."

'Such simple faith in his powers of exorcism was too much for the Master to resist; so he dismounted from his horse, tied him to a swinging limb, walked into the house, with his riding-whip in his hand, and paused, grave and erect — as I have so often seen him when the deeper resources of his nature were drawn upon — right in the middle of the room into which the doorway, in which Mat was sitting, led.

'"You lazy, worthless, wretched spirits!" he said in those clear, authoritative tones which no living man or thing on those plantations ever heard and rebelled, "one and all I charge you immediately to quit these premises, and never again, so long as this faithful friend and servant of mine remains here, to haunt them more."

'And with that he brought the heel of

his boot down upon the floor with such force as to shake the water out of the wooden bucket that stood upon the near-by shelf, and cracked his whip once — though but once — with such energy that the lint floated away like broken thistle-down from its lash. There was so much reality in the whole demonstration that even in old Mat's face there was fully as much awe as gratitude.

'A few days after the Master turned the chimney of old Mat's house again, and again reined up his horse in front of its door. As he came around the house, there was not a sound but the peaceful breathings of the woods, and the blithe song of a field sparrow in a neighboring tangle of brambles, telling his mate and the world how little his cheerful spirit was vexed by the fierce noonday heat. Old Mat was sitting in his doorway, the picture of tranquil contentment. When the

usual salutations had been exchanged, the Master asked him whether the spirits had troubled him any more.

"'Nah, sah, dat dey ain't," he promptly replied. "Dey done all light out from here, ez I was sartain dey would do ez soon ez you give out dat noration. You allus knowed dat you was de Marster of de overseers, de niggers, an' de mules on dese plantations, an' now you knows dat you is de Marster of de sperrits too.'"

CHAPTER VIII

THE END

THE next day was one of those brilliantly clear, crisp, yet temperate days, by no means infrequent during the late fall in Southside Virginia, when a man would much rather be a living dog than a dead lion; and, if he has a spark of the spirit of Primitive Man in him, turns eagerly to hunting and shooting. Mounted on horseback — with a little colored boy behind Charles, to take care of our horses when our setters stood a covey, and to mark the spots where the birds that escaped our guns came to earth again — Charles and I rode off to the stubble-fields. Nor did we return to the mansion until we had filled the saddle-bags (strapped behind my saddle) with quail, not to mention a pair or so of mallards, which we shot as they rose from the big trunk ditch in the low-grounds.

The succeeding day, Sunday, I had the pleasure of taking Ellen in a buggy to Roanoke Church — a large, quadrangular frame edifice, on the northern boundary of the plantation, as plain and bare in appearance as a dry-goods box. Churches of this type were so common in Southside Virginia that the worthy Presbyterian minister, at that time in charge of this one, was once hurried by his affronted piety and good taste (so Ellen told me) into expressing the belief that Providence had brought down the Civil War upon the head of the South as a punishment for the crude character of its ecclesiastical architecture.

On entering the building with Ellen, I was surprised to see that the sexes were as jealously separated from each other by a central wooden barrier (which ran across its pews at right angles) as they had ever been in the early churches of Puritan New England. This barrier, however, was not higher than the backs of the pews themselves, and did not prevent

me from sitting as close to Ellen as it allowed me to do, and whispering a word or so to her every now and then before the service began. The attendance was very numerous; for the people of Charlotte County were a profoundly religious people. Perhaps, too, there was something in the assertion, which Charles once made to me, that they did not deserve so much credit, after all, for being such church-goers, because, in a hermit community like theirs, church-going was the only form of social recreation open to many of them. Indeed, on this occasion I noted for myself that the persons making up the concourse that gathered at the church door before the commencement of the service were so busily chatting with each other about the last sales of tobacco and other matters of rural interest as to suggest naturally enough the thought that regard for the salvation of their souls was by no means the only thing that had drawn them to the spot.

On our way home, Ellen told me a story touching their last minister. He had preached in Texas long enough, at a time when young Texans were strongly inclined to migrate to Mexico, to hoard a large stock of ready-made sermons. One Sunday morning, after he became attached to Roanoke Church, he was a little late in leaving the parsonage for his pulpit, and hastily snatched up one of those sermons without first satisfying himself that its local coloring was suitable to his new environment. The startling result was a long exhortation, in which he earnestly adjured his auditors, hardly one of whom had ever given a thought of any sort to Mexico, not to make the fatal mistake of taking up their residence in that lawless country. This story I had no difficulty in capping with one of my own about an English clergyman who severely strained the decorum of a Boston audience by reading from a manuscript sermon, which he had brought oversea with him, the statement that

something (I forget what) had never before happened 'in all these realms.'

No *contretemps* of the kind was likely ever to befall the minister to whom Ellen and I listened on this particular occasion. He was a gifted orator, and spoke entirely without manuscript or notes upon the true meaning of the term, 'abundant entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.' There is one entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, he said, for the ordinary struggling Christian who barely contrives to stagger, sore and bleeding, across its threshold; another for the ordinary Christian of firmer faith and more consistent conduct; but still another, and a far more abundant one, for such a missionary hero as Dr. David Livingstone, who, accounting death and danger as no more than the dust under his feet, had, by years of simple-hearted and unfaltering self-devotion, brought the light of God's face to the darkest recesses of human savagery and superstition, and won for his body a grave

in Westminster Abbey, and for his soul an easy pathway through the portals that open into Eternal Life.

Ellen also had another story to tell me about a handsome, distinguished-looking man, some forty-five years old, whom I had seen undeniably dozing in church during one of the most eloquent portions of the minister's sermon, but who had come up to her after church, and plied her with such graceful compliments and delightful pleasantry that even her quick wit had to halt a little now and then for breath. Several Sundays before, she said, when this neighbor, who was a great friend of Charles' and one of the leading planters of that region, had been good-naturedly taken to task by the minister for invariably slumbering during his sermons, he had defended himself by saying that the doctrine of the minister was so flawlessly sound that he felt it was an inexcusable reflection on it for him to remain awake while it was being expounded.

On the occasion when he came up to us, partly to pay to Ellen the *devoirs* that the old-fashioned Virginia gallantry, seasoned or unseasoned, was never slow to pay to beauty, and partly to find out who the devil I was, he was very cordial in his manner to me, after Ellen had introduced him to me; and, like the chivalrous gentleman he was, he was even more cordial when I informed him that I had been a Union soldier.

'I was in the Confederate Navy,' he said, 'but, like many other naval officers of the Confederacy, I was called upon to fight almost everywhere *except on water*.'

In the course of the conversation which followed, he narrated an incident that harmonized perfectly, Ellen declared, with his impulsive, high-spirited and generous character.

'Not long after the Civil War,' he said, 'I was in Washington. As I was moving about the lobby of my hotel, I observed close at hand an officer in the American Navy, with

whom I was very intimate when I resigned my commission in it and went South, on the eve of the conflict. Everything had gone well with him, as his insignia of high rank showed, and everything, of course, had gone very differently with me. I not only wore no uniform of any sort, but I hardly knew, in the complete derangement of my former life, what civilian pursuit to turn to for the support of my family. In my pride and uncertainty as to the state of his own feelings, I resolved not to recognize him first, and I kept right on by him, as if I had never seen him in my life. But I did not get far. The first thing I knew he was hugging me with his strong arms like a bear, and saying, as he held up a face full of honest, deep-seated joy to mine: "Carrington, I see you are the same damned old fool you always were!"'

When Ellen and I arrived at Morotoc, I disclosed in conversation with the Mistress the impression left on my mind by the parti-

tion between the sexes at church. She did not believe in any barriers between the sexes, except those prescribed by stainless marriage faith and the really essential reservations of womanly delicacy. The more she thought over the matter, the more her Covenanter spirit was determined to bring the separation to an end. So, not long afterwards she astonished the members of the congregation not a little by sailing 'like a stately ship of Tarsus, bound for the isles of Javan or Gadire' — to borrow a simile from 'Samson Agonistes' — into the pew on the male side of the church, where Charles was, and sitting down beside him, with just enough rattling of anchor chains to let every one know that she had come permanently to rest. Her example was promptly followed by the other ladies who attended the church, and, from that time on, I believe, there were no longer any Pyrenees in Roanoke Church.

The next day, Monday, was court day, and

Charles and I went down to Charlotte Court House behind Henry Lewis' roans. As we bore off from the river, the country became not unlike that along 'the ridge' between Randolph and Morotoc; but, as we approached the Court House, it presented, in one respect, a very different appearance. Every lateral road and almost every woodland path was making its contribution of human beings to the motley assembly of whites and blacks, which was forming in and about the Court House. Part were on horseback, part in vehicles, and part on foot. Some were on their way to consult with their attorneys; some to serve as jurors, or to testify as witnesses; some to transact one sort of business or another with their fellow-farmers or merchants; some to hear the lawyers plead and the candidates harangue. Most of them, however, were there merely to gratify the general social instincts that are so deeply implanted in us and must have some sort of aliment to

feed on, even though it be nothing better than the movement and bustle of a homespun crowd of fellow-creatures on a Southside Virginia court day, split up into little groups of animated talkers on the court-house green, or trudging about in the deep red clay of the wide, unpaved roads around it. To an individual, who rarely heard at home in the late fall anything but the familiar voices of the members of his own family, the scolding of a squirrel, or the cawing of a crow, it was a novel and interesting experience to find himself where the intense quietude of his daily life was broken by unaccustomed sounds; even though they were nothing more than the coaxing solicitations and shallow jests of an auctioneer selling off a drove of mules, or a set of second-hand furniture; the unceasing 'Here's yo' fried chicken!' of a colored woman, fresh from Chickentown, in her bandanna headdress; the noisy turbulence of a fighting-mad inebriate, or the chatter of an excited lunatic

drawn to the bars of the county jail by the unwonted stir on the court-house green.

While Charles was obtaining the advice of his counsel about some legal point, I listened intently to an eloquent plea, in behalf of a prisoner indicted for murder, made by 'Yankee Allen,' a Union soldier, who had liked what he saw of the South during the Civil War so much that he did not go back to the North after it ended, but settled down to law and Republican politics in Southside Virginia. 'A piece of rotten driftwood, stranded upon the shores of Virginia by the tide of receding war,' was what one of his Democratic antagonists (whose judgment, of course, should be weighed with due regard to the fierce partisanship of the period) once termed him in a bitter speech.

For a time after the Civil War, men like Allen, backed up by the support of the recently enfranchised blacks, had everything pretty much their own way in Charlotte

County. But with the reënfranchisement of the whites, their power came to an end. The first real premonition of this change was the election by the Democrats in the county of a prominent rebel and planter to the State Legislature. His opponent was an illiterate negro, who was so eager to get down to Richmond that, when defeated, he asked his successful antagonist to take him as his valet. A condition of things under which such a request was possible was almost as bad as slavery itself.

From what I could hear, the defeat of this negro, Isaac Dabbs, was to no little degree due to a tragic incident in which a young man, who was the son of one of the most prominent citizens of the county, became involved. In 1867, this young man had given to a negro shoemaker, Joe Holmes, who represented Charlotte and Halifax Counties in the Virginia Constitutional Convention of that year, a parcel of leather with which the latter was to make the former a pair of boots. The shoe-

maker converted the material to his own use. An angry altercation on the court-house green followed. Both drew their pistols at the same moment; but the aim of the shoemaker failed him, while that of his customer went straight and with deadly effect to its mark. In the confusion which ensued, the young man made good his escape from the county, and, while it was a long time before he could have dared to return to it, the terror inspired by his act had a decided effect in accelerating the recovery of political power by the whites.

After the adjournment of the Court, Charles and I repaired to one of the two rival taverns, and took dinner at a long table at which the County Judge and some of the other lions of court-day were seated. The table groaned with a profuse variety of meats, vegetables, sweets, and condiments, but the cooking was decidedly of a nature to give point to the saying that 'God sends meat but the devil sends cooks.'

After dinner we returned to the Court House, where a political rally was to take place. There were, I hardly need say, the inevitable references by the speakers to Patrick Henry and John Randolph of Roanoke. To the Virginian the Past is almost as real as the Present. I recollect that I was once told by Daniel C. Gilman, the President of the Johns Hopkins University, that, when he was on a visit to the University of Virginia, he observed that every one spoke of 'Mr.' Jefferson exactly as if he were just around the corner. The speeches were also strongly marked by the *amour propre* which once led a Virginian to say that no one should ever ask a man whether he was born in Virginia because, if he was, he will certainly tell you himself, and, if he was not, he will be ashamed to admit it. But, after all, it can not be denied that, when a Virginian looks back over his shoulder, his eye takes in some very commanding forms and noble vistas of achievement; nor can it be

doubted that he is good company either on the hustings, at table, or in a lounging room.

After the set speakers had concluded, Charles, who was uncommonly popular in the county, was called upon so insistently that he had to respond in a few words. He did so with striking effect, facing his audience with a countenance and figure instinct with graceful dignity, and counselling the people of the county in clear, resonant accents, which reached every corner of the large building, to accept unreservedly the results of the late war, as General Lee had done; to frown sternly upon every appeal to their sectional passions and resentments, and to look to time and the full return of truly fraternal feelings upon the part of the Northern people, seconded by their own unceasing vigilance, for the permanent settlement of the domestic problems that were then causing them so much anxiety.

One fact stated by Charles was of peculiar interest to me. He said that a bill, which pro-

vided the necessary appropriations for the initial cost of deporting and colonizing all the negroes in Virginia who were then, or might thereafter become, free, had failed of passage in the Virginia Senate in 1832 by one vote, after being passed by the lower branch of the Virginia Legislature; that a member of his family connection was a member of the body at the time, and voted against the bill, supposing that he was reflecting the wishes of his constituents; but that he had deeply regretted his action when he returned to his county, and was told by many of its largest slave-holders that he had made a grave mistake; as the tendency of the measure would have been to encourage the manumission of slaves by making their masters feel that, if manumitted, they could be removed beyond the limits of the State without expense to their owners. Afterwards Charles more than once expressed the opinion to me that, if the proposition had carried, the curse of slavery would have been

lifted from the back of Virginia, she would have refused to secede from the Union, and, influenced by the refusal of the most powerful of the Southern States to secede, the other Southern States would either have never seceded themselves or, seceding, would have been crushed with much less effusion of blood and waste of treasure than they were.

The day after our return from the Court House was election day, and I accompanied Charles to Aspenwall, the voting precinct in his district. The Mistress told me that the first time he cast a vote there, after the suffrage in Charlotte County had been so profoundly modified by the consequences of the Civil War, he came home hopelessly sick at heart, and casting himself upon a sofa, and burying his face in his hands, declared that, if he could renounce imperious obligations of duty and self-preservation, he would never again go within a mile of such a spectacle of intellectual perversion and moral squalor as

the piebald rabble about the polls had presented to his eyes that day.

When we reached Aspenwall, there were only a few persons there besides the election officials. The whites had then found one means or another of successfully defying the authority of the potentate whom John Randolph derisively termed 'King Numbers,' and, whatever may have been the cost in the long run to the permanent interests of political morality, there had been a manifest change for the better at any rate in mere appearances.

A week more of novel and instructive experiences passed over my head, and then I went back to Boston, but, of course, I returned to Morotoc. That is the reason why I have narrated so many things about it in this tale that I could not have known if I had never been there except in that month of November.

The next time, however, I did not go at the

invitation of Charles. I had written to Ellen asking her if I might come, and she had answered simply that I might — an answer that meant then by no means what it would signify now.

For a time I thought I could never bring that bright, graceful, mocking girl to lasting terms, and my heart died down in me at the thought; for, after I came to know her well, I never had any difficulty in understanding just what the Virginians mean when they asseverate that a Virginia girl makes the most uncertain of sweethearts but the most certain of wives. Once, when I was ardently pressing my suit, she told me that it would not do for her to marry a man who had had a part in the conquest of Virginia.

'But have you not retaliated sufficiently,' I replied, 'by making such an abject captive of me?'

On another occasion she insisted that her training and points of view about many things

were so entirely repugnant to those of the Bostonians that she feared she could never recommend herself to the favor of my relations and friends.

'Only try,' I urged, 'and, if you do not succeed, I will return to Morotoc, and live with you on "The Back Hill" or "The Street," and grow tobacco or anything else you please.'

On still another occasion, when I was even more importunate, she could find no excuse except the obviously evasive one that she was a Presbyterian and I an Episcopalian. Without a moment's hesitation I replied (God and good Dr. Frothingham forgive me!):

'If you will only marry me, I will gladly become a Mohammedan.'

Gradually, by a process of investment as obstinate and tedious as that by which Grant effected the fall of Richmond, I succeeded in breaking down all the outer defenses of her resisting coquetry, and penetrating the inner citadel of her heart. This was on a cloudless

day (oh! cloudless day, indeed, it was for me and the children who love her so dearly!), when we were sitting on the rustic seat in the arbor, woven by a round group of living cedars, which stands at the beginning of 'The Lover's Walk.' Reduced at last to helpless capitulation by my love, the fertility of resource that had so often baffled my covetous approaches at length forsook her, and, clasping her unresisting right hand with my left, I placed my right arm about her waist, and drew from her lips both a mute and an articulate confession that she loved me.

We were married shortly afterwards, and twice at least every year we go down to Morotoc to see Charles and Sally, and to renew our familiarity with everything about the place that is intertwined with our joint life. The fear that my Boston relations and friends would not take kindly to her has proved, as I knew it would, entirely groundless. The fact is that there are much stronger affinities be-

tween what is best in Massachusetts and what is best in Virginia than the people of these respective commonwealths have ever realized. It is true that occasionally some over-earnest countrywoman of mine has a critical word to say to Ellen about the industrial torpor of the South, its race prejudices, or its indifference to liberal movements such as the female suffrage agitation and the like. But there is never any responsive spark. For such persons, one and all, Ellen has a single, laughing, stereotyped reply:

'My dear, you just do not understand.'

Informed by this tactful spirit, her mental gifts, her amiable, unselfish nature, and her sterling virtues make her as much admired and beloved in Boston as she was in Virginia. Ellen has grown older, but she retains her captivating liveliness of spirits; and her appearance and manner are still too closely akin to what they were when I first met her for me yet to admit that any such sober qualification

as the one in Emerson's well-known line, 'a gentle wife, but fairy none,' is applicable to her.

THE END

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